Marg.t Goodman

# PRIVATE THOUGHTS;

In Two PARTS Complete.

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## PART I.

UPON

# RELIGION,

Digeſted into

*TWELVE ARTICLES*;

With Practical

## RESOLUTIONS

Formed thereupon.

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## PART II.

UPON A

*CHRISTIAN LIFE*;

OR,

Neceſſary Directions for its *Beginning* and *Progreſs* upon EARTH, in Order to its Final Perfection in the

## BEATIFICK VISION.

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By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

Late Lord Biſhop of St. ASAPH.

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THE TWENTY-FIRST EDITION.

*LONDON:*

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# PREFACE.

AFTER ſo great a name as that of Biſhop BEVERIDGE in the Title, it was as ſuperfluous to attempt any farther recomdation of theſe Papers, as it would be impoſſible to effect it. If any thing can add to the eſteem they muſt every-where meet with, upon the account of ſo great an Author, it muſt be a ſerious peruſal and application of them.

Thoſe that read them with the ſame ſpirit of candour, with which this great man always read the works of others, and with the ſame ſpirit of piety, with which he wrote his own; will undoubtedly diſcover in them ſuch a lively idea of the great genius of the author, and ſo ſenſibly experience the good influence of them upon their minds, as will more effectually engage their approbation, than the higheſt encomiums from another hand.

The great misfortune is, that thoſe who have moſt need to be inſtructed and reformed, have no true taſte or r.liſh for books of this nature: Their eyes are dazzled with the glittering appearances of the objects of ſenſe,

and their hearts enſlaved to the works of darkneſs; ſo that the beams of divine light are but troubleſome and offenſive to them: Every point of faith is a contradiction to their principles, and every precept enjoined a reproach to their morals. And therefore, in order to ſtave off thoſe ſelf-condemning thoughts, that naturally ariſe from the ſerious peruſal of ſuch ſort of treatiſes; they ſcoff at, and deſpiſe them, as dull and inſipid; not worth the conſideration of men of more refined parts and deeper penetration, who are too wiſe to be guided by the rule of GOD's word, and too obſtinate to be perſuaded to walk, in any other path, but that which the devil has chalked out for them, "the path which leads "to deſtruction."

But theſe men would do well to conſider, before they are wholly under the power of deluſion, that this is not really owing to any flaws or defects in ſuch performances, but to their own reprobate minds and depraved judgments, which tarniſh the beauty, caſt a miſt before the truth, fruſtrate the influence, and pervert the deſign of them; like a vitiated palate, which nauſeates the moſt delicious taſtes; or a foul or diſordered ſtomach, that turns the moſt wholſome food into poiſon and corruption. So that they muſt firſt diveſt themſelves of their luſt and pride, their prejudice and partiality, before they can ever expect to reap any benefit or advantage by this, or any other diſcourſes, that tend to the promoting of piety and religion.

Having thus opened the way to the reading of this book, it may not be improper, in order to ſet it in its true light, and do juſtice to the author of it, to ſay ſomething more particularly concerning both; and to adverti ſe the reader, that the following ſheets were writ by the biſhop in his younger years, upon his firſt entrance into holy orders. And tho' they may not, perhaps, be ſo perfect and correct, as if he himſelf had lived to give

the finiſhing ſtroke to them, and fit them for the preſs with his own hand; yet as the roughneſs of a jewel doth not leſſen the worth and value of it, when the brightneſs of its natural luſtre, even under that diſadvantage, outſhines that of others, which are poliſhed and refined by art; ſo it is to be hoped, the candid and judicious reader will, in this well deſigned piece, however unfiniſhed, diſcover ſuch ſingular beauties and graces, as few others, even, at the higheſt pitch of their attainments, and with the utmoſt care and diligence, are able to come up to.

As to the author's deſign in writing theſe papers, it is ſufficiently ſet forth in the title of them. He conſidered, that truth of doctrine, and innocency of life, were both abſolutely neceſſary to the due exerciſe of the Sacred Function which he had the honour and happineſs to be admitted into. He knew the power of example to prevail even beyond that of precept, and was very ſolicitous, with the bleſſed apoſtle, to *make his own calling and election ſure, leſt that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.* To the end, therefore, that he might both *ſave himſelf, and them that heard him*, that both *by his life and doctrine he might ſet forth the glory of God, and ſet forward the ſalvation of men*, He drew up theſe articles, to ſettle his principles in point of faith, and formed theſe Reſolutions upon them, to regulate his actions with regard to practice.

What great things might not the church promiſe herſelf from a foundation ſo well laid! from principles ſetled with ſo much learning and judgment, and reſolutions formed upon ſuch ſtrict rules of piety and religion? What glorious expectations in an age of that degeneracy of faith and manners, wherein he then lived, might not be juſtly raiſed from hence, for the future reformation of both?

And, indeed, this excellent perſon did even more than ſatisfy all theſe extraordinary hopes which the early and ample ſpecimens he gave of his virtue and knowledge had made the world conceive of him. For having taken this prudent and effectual care to ground and determine his own faith and practice; and being ever mindful of the injunction laid upon him, when he was ordained prieſt, '*To conſider the end of his miniſtry towards the children* '*of God, towards the Spouſe and Body of* CHRIST; *he* '*never ceaſed his labour, care and diligence, until he had* '*done all that in him lay* (as our holy church does moſt admirably expreſs the duty of that order) *to bring all* '*ſuch as were committed to his charge unto that agreement* '*in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeneſs* '*and perfectneſs of age in* CHRIST, *that there ſhould be* '*no place left among them for error in religion, or for* '*viciouſneſs in life.*'

While his care of ſouls was chiefly confined to the bounds of a ſingle pariſh, with what labour and zeal did he apply himſelf to the diſcharge of his miniſtry, in the ſeveral parts and offices of it! how powerful and inſtructive was he in his diſcourſes from the pulpit! how warm and affectionate in his private exhortations! how orthodox in his doctrine! how regular and uniform in the public worſhip of the church! in a word, ſo zealous was he, and heavenly-minded, in all the ſpiritual exerciſes of his parochial function, and his labours were ſo remarkably crowned with bleſſing and ſucceſs, that as he himſelf was juſtly ſtyled the great reviver and reſtorer of primitive piety; ſo his pariſh was deſervedly propoſed, as the beſt model and pattern for the reſt of its neighbours to copy after.

Nor was the Arch-deacon, or the Biſhop, leſs vigilant than the Pariſh-Prieſt: His care and diligence increaſed as his power in the church was enlarged; and as he had before diſcharged the duty of a faithful paſtor

over his ſingle fold, ſo when his authority was extended to larger diſtricts, he ſtill purſued the ſame pious and laborious methods of advancing the honour and intereſt of religion, by watching over both clergy and laity, and giving them all neceſſary direction and aſſiſtance for the effectual performance of their reſpective duties.

Accordingly, He was no ſooner advanced to the epiſcopal chair, but, in a moſt pathetic and obliging letter to the clergy of his dioceſe, he recommended to them 'the 'Duty of catechiſing and inſtructing the people committed 'to their charge in the principles of the Chriſtian religion, 'to the end that they might know what they were to believe, 'and do, in order to ſalvation;' And told them, 'He 'thought it neceſſary to begin with that, without which 'what-ever elſe he, or they, ſhould do, would turn to little or no account, as to the main end of the miniſtry.' And to enable them to do this, the more effectually, He ſent them a plain and eaſy *expoſition upon the church catechiſm*; of which I need ſay nothing more, and can ſay nothing greater, than that it was drawn up by himſelf, in a method, which, in the opinion of ſo great a judge, ſeemed, of all others, the moſt proper to inſtruct the people.

Thus endeavouring to make himſelf and others every day wiſer and better, labouring to eſtabliſh ſound principles, and ſettle good manners wherever he came, as it was the foundation which this holy man laid in theſe Articles and Reſolutions; ſo we ſee it was the great work of his life to build upon it; as might eaſily be made appear, from a faithful and particular relation of the ſeveral ſtages and paſſages of it during the courſe of his miniſtry; the bare enumeration of which would ſwell this preface into a book. That fair pourtrait will, I hope, be drawn down by ſome abler pen.

In the mean time, there is yet another inſtance of his

great concern and unwearied endeavours for the eſtabliſhing of ſound doctrine, which I muſt not omit the mention of, becauſe it is a work of ſo much affinity with theſe Articles, and what the reader may, with great advantage, have recourſe to for farther ſatisfaction upon theſe general heads of divinity, which he has here given us only in abridgement; 'Tis his learned *expoſition upon the thirty-nine Articles*; which is promiſed, in a ſhort time, to be committed to the preſs; and which is the more earneſtly deſired and expected, as being a performance, which the church, at this time, ſo much wants, and which he, beyond others, was in ſuch an extraordinary manner, qualified for.

Such diſcourſes as theſe, the one giving a true expoſition of the doctrine of our church, the other endeavouring to eſtabliſh it by an orthodox faith, and an unſpotted life, were never more ſeaſonable than in this age: when the very Being of the church is called in queſtion, under a pretence of maintaining her rights; and the principles of Chriſtianity are no longer ſecretly undermined, but openly attacked; when books are publiſhed againſt all revealed religion, and Deiſm inſults and triumphs bare-faced, without reſtraint, without reproach. In a word, when we are arrived to that diſſoluteneſs of manners, as well as principles, that perſons of the higheſt quality, and ſtation, are addreſſed to in print, as patrons of Libertiniſm; and that which has, in all ages, been called, and eſteemed, the greateſt wiſdom, is ſcoffed at by falſe wit; and Chriſtianity, under the notion of Enthuſiaſm, expoſed to the contempt of the meaneſt capacities, and hooted out of the world by the very dregs of the people.

In ſo general an inundation of profaneneſs, and licentiouſneſs, Providence ſeemed indeed to have raiſed up this great and good man to ſtand in the gap, and ſtem the tide againſt it: But where the torrent is ſo impetu-

ous, and the forces, that ſhould unite in ſtriving to divert it, ſo weak and puſillanimous, there is more danger the very oppoſers ſhould be borne down the ſtream, than there are hopes of making good the oppoſition. But, however, the doctrine and diſcipline of our church may be repreſented, exploded and deſpiſed, and our holy religion become only a name, which is almoſt every-where ſpoken againſt; this good Biſhop will nevertheleſs have the honour as he already enjoys the reward, not only of bearing teſtimony againſt the growing ill, but of having done all that he could (and who could do more than he!) to reſtrain and ſubdue it.

It may, perhaps, be thought a bad omen to our church to have loſt ſo able a champion, when ſhe ſeems to ſtand ſo much in need of him. But bleſſed be God, we have not altogether loſt him: He has left us behind him, in theſe excellent papers, (to ſay nothing of his ſermons, and other incomparable writings) ſuch clear reaſoning, and convincing arguments for the grounding of our principles; and ſuch uſeful rules and directions for the government of our converſation, that we may yet hope for a happy reformation in both, if we are not wanting to ourſelves in the uſe and application of them.

Would the clergy, the younger ſort eſpecially, take this method, upon their firſt admiſſion into holy orders, (and it ought to be no hard matter to perſuade them to it, ſince it is the very end and deſign of their miniſtry) it could not fail, by the bleſſing of God, of producing very admirable effects. Their principles, thus prudently ſettled, would ſtand the ſhock, even of a fiery trial; and their reſolutions, thus maturely formed, would undauntedly bear up againſt the moſt powerful temptation.

This, if any thing, would raiſe the dignity of the Prieſthood to its firſt inſtitution, ſilence all the loud clamours, as well as malicious whiſpers, that, like echo's,

are redoubled and reverberated upon them, and gain them ſuch an intereſt and reputation among the people, and ſuch an honour and authority in the diſcharge of their function, and from reverencing the perſon, and commending the pattern, they would inſenſibly proceed to the imitation of it; till, by degrees, the flock too, as well as the ſhepherd, would *become wiſe to ſalvation*, would devoutly *ſanctify the Lord GOD in their hearts*, and not only ſo, but be *ready always to give an anſwer to every one that ſhould aſk them a reaſon of the hope that is in them.*

And were both clergy and laity thus rightly principled, and firmly reſolved; the enemies of our Zion would have both leſs encouragement to attack, and leſs power to hurt us: Our national church might then deſpiſe all the wicked attempts and deſigns that are daily made and formed againſt her, and aſſume to herſelf that comfortable promiſe and aſſurance, that our Saviour himſelf has given, that even *the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt her.*

All that I have farther to ſay, is only to apologize for having ſaid ſo much upon a ſubject that ſo little needs it; and to cloſe the whole with my hearty prayers to the throne of grace, that this pious and excellent book may meet with that deſired effect and ſucceſs, which the author aimed at in the compoſing of it, and may be as uſeful to others, as it was to himſelf.

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# THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.



WHEN, in my ſerious thoughts, and more retired meditations, I am got into the cloſet of my heart, and there begin to look within myſelf, and conſider what I am, I preſently find myſelf to be a reaſonable creature: For was I not ſo, it would be impoſſible for me thus to reaſon and reflect. But am I a reaſonable creature? Why then, I am ſure, within this veil of fleſh there dwells a ſoul, and that of a higher nature than either plants or brutes are endued with; for they have ſouls indeed, but yet they know it not, and that becauſe their ſouls, or material forms, (as the Philoſophers term them) are not any thing really and eſſentially diſtinct from the very matter of their bodies; which being not capable of a reflective act, though they are, they know it not, and though they act, they know it not; it being not poſſible for them to look within themſelves, or to reflect upon their own exiſtencies and actions. But it is not ſo with me; I not only know I have a ſoul, but that I have ſuch a ſoul, which can conſider of itſelf, and deliberate of every particular action that iſſues from it. Nay, I can conſider, that I am now conſidering of my own actions, and can reflect upon myſelf reflecting; inſomuch that had I nothing elſe to do, I could ſpin out one reflection upon another, to infinity.

And, indeed, was there never another argument in the world to convince me of the ſpiritual nature of my ſoul, this alone would be ſufficient to wreſt the belief and confeſſion of it from me: for what below a ſpirit can thus reflect upon itſelf? Or, what below a ſpirit can put forth itſelf into ſuch actions, as I find I can exerciſe myſelf in? My ſoul can, in a moment, mount from earth to heaven, fly from pole to pole, and view all the courſes and motions of the celeſtial bodies, the ſun, moon, and ſtars; and then the next moment returning to myſelf again, I can conſider, where I have been, what glorious objects have been preſented to my view, and wonder at the nimbleneſs and activity of my ſoul, that can run over ſo many millions of miles, and finiſh ſo great a work in ſo ſmall a ſpace of time. And are ſuch-like acts as theſe the effects of droſſy earth, or impenetrable matter? Can any thing below a ſpirit raiſe itſelf ſo much beyond the reach of material actions?

But ſtay a little; What is this ſoul of mine, that I am now ſpeaking of, that it is ſo nimble in its actions, and ſo ſpiritual in its nature? Why, it is that which actuates and informs the ſeveral organs and members of my body, and enables me not only to perform the natural actions of life and ſenſe, but likewiſe to underſtand, conſult, argue, and conclude; to will and nill, hope and deſpair, deſire and abhor, joy and grieve, love and hate; to be angry now, and again appeaſed. 'Tis that by which at this very time, my head is inditing, my hand is writing, my heart reſolving, what to believe, and how to practice. In a word, my ſoul is Myſelf, and therefore when I ſpeak of my ſoul, I ſpeak of no other perſon but myſelf.

Not as if I totally excluded this earthly ſubſtance of my body from being a part of myſelf; I know it is. But I think it moſt proper and reaſonable to denominate Myſelf from my better part: For alas! take away my ſoul, and my body falls, on courſe, into its primitive corruption, and moulders into the duſt, from whence it was firſt taken. *All fleſh is graſs*, ſays the prophet, *and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field.* And this is no metaphorical expreſſion, but a real truth; for what is that which I feed upon, but merely graſs, digeſted into corn, fleſh, and the like; which by a ſecond digeſtion is transfuſed and converted into the ſubſtance of my body? And thence it is my body is but like the graſs, or flower of the field, fading, tranſient, and momentary, to-day flouriſhing in all its glory, *to-morrow cut down, dried up*,

*and withered.* But now, how far is this beneath the ſpiritual and incorruptible nature of my immortal ſoul? which ſubſiſts of itſelf, and can never be diſſolved, being not compounded of any earthly or elementary matter, (as the body is) but is a pure ſpiritual ſubſtance, infuſed into me by God, to whom, after a ſhort abode in the body, it is to return, and to live and continue for ever, either in a ſtate of happineſs, or miſery, in another life.

But muſt it ſo indeed? How much then does it concern me, ſeriouſly to bethink myſelf, where I had beſt to lead this everlaſting life, in the heavenly manſions of eternal glory, or elſe in the dreadful dungeon of infernal miſery? But betwixt theſe, (as there is no medium, ſo) there is no compariſon; and, therefore, I ſhall not put it to the queſtion, which place to chuſe to live in? But without giving the other that honour to ſtand in competition with it, I, this morning, with the leave of the moſt High God, do chuſe the land of Canaan, the kingdom of heaven, to be the lot of mine inheritance, the only ſeat of bliſs and glory for my ſoul to reſt and dwell in, to all eternity.

But heaven, they ſay, is a place hard to come at, yea, the king of that glorious place hath told me, that *ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to eternal life, and that there are but few that find it*, Mat. vii. 14. Yea, and that *many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, Luke iii. 24. What, therefore, muſt I do? Why, I muſt either reſolve to make it my whole buſineſs to get to heaven, or elſe I muſt never hope or expect to come thither. Without any farther diſpute, therefore, about it; I reſolve, at this time, in the preſence of Almighty God, that from this day forward, I will make it my whole buſineſs here upon earth, to look after my happineſs in heaven, and to walk circumſpectly in thoſe bleſſed paths, that God hath appointed all to walk in, that ever expect to come to him.

Now, though there be but one way, and that a narrow one too, that leads to heaven; yet there are two things requiſite to all thoſe that walk in it; and they are Faith and Obedience, to believe and to live aright. So that it as much behoves me to have my faith rightly confirmed in the fundamentals of religion, as to have my obedience exactly conformed to the laws of God. And theſe two duties are ſo inſeparably united, that the former cannot well be ſuppoſed without the latter; for I cannot obey what God hath commanded me, unleſs I firſt believe what he hath taught me.

And they are both equally difficult, as they are neceſſary: Indeed of the two, I think it is harder to lay the ſure foundation of faith, than to build the ſuperſtructure of obedience upon it; for it ſeems next to impoſſible, for one that believes every truth, not to obey every command that is written in the word of God. But it is not ſo eaſy a thing as it is commonly thought, to believe the word of God, and to be firmly eſtabliſhed in the neceſſary points of religion; eſpecially in theſe wicked times wherein we live; in which there are ſo many pernicious errors and damnable hereſies crept into the articles of ſome men's faith, as do not only ſhock the foundation of the church of Chriſt, but ſtrike at the root of all religion. The firſt thing, therefore, that, by the grace of God, I am reſolved to do, in reference to my everlaſting eſtate, is to ſee my faith, that it be both rightly placed and firmly fixed; that I may not be as a *wave toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning practices of thoſe that lie in wait to deceive*; but that I may be thoroughly ſettled in my faith and judgment concerning thoſe things, the knowledge of, and aſſent unto which, is abſolutely neceſſary to my future happineſs. Let, therefore, what times ſoever come upon me; let what temptation ſoever be thrown before me, I am reſolved by the grace of God, ſtedfaſtly to believe as followeth.

## ARTICLE I.

*I believe there is one God, the Being of all beings.*

THE other article of my faith I think to be true, becauſe they are ſo; This is true becauſe I think ſo: For if there was no God, and ſo this article not true, I could not be, and ſo not think it true. But in that I think, I am ſure I am; and in that I am, I am ſure there is a God, for if there was no God, how came I to be? How came I hither? Who gave me my being? Myſelf? That could not be; for before I had a being, I was nothing, and, therefore, could do nothing, much leſs make myſelf a being. Did my parents give me my being? Alas! they knew not that I ſhould be, before I was; and, therefore, certainly could not give me my being, when I was not.

As to my ſoul, (which I call myſelf) itis plain, they could not give me that, becauſe 'tis a being of a ſpiritual nature, quite diſtinct from matter, (as my own experience tells me)

and, therefore, could not be the product of any natural or material agent: For that a bodily ſubſtance ſhould give being to a ſpiritual one, implies a contradiction. And if it could neither make itſelf, nor take its riſe from any earthly or ſecondary cauſe, I may certainly conclude, from my own reaſon, as well as from Divine revelation, that it muſt be infuſed by God, though I am not able to determine, either when, or how, it was done.

As to my body; indeed, I muſt own it was derived from my parents, who were immediately concerned in bringing the materials of it together: But, then, who made up theſe coarſe materials into the form or figure of a body? Was this the effect of natural generation? But how came my parents by this generative power? Did they derive it by ſucceſſion, from our firſt parents in paradiſe? Be it ſo. But whence came they? Did they ſpring out of the earth? No. What then? Were they made by chance? This could not be; for as chance ſeldom or never produces any one effect, that is regular and uniform, ſo it cannot be ſuppoſed, that a being of ſuch admirable beauty, ſymmetry, and proportion, and ſuch a nice contexture of parts, as the body of man is, ſhould ever be jumbled together by a fortuitous concourſe of atoms, which nothing but the chimeras of Epicurus could ever reduce into a regular form and compoſition.

And the like may be ſaid of all other created beings in the world. For there is no natural cauſe can give being to any thing, unleſs it has that being it gives, in itſelf; for it is a received maxim in philoſophy, that *nothing can give what it has not*. And ſo, however the bodies of men, or brutes, or plants, may now, in the ordinary courſe of nature, be produced by generation, yet there muſt needs be ſome one ſupreme Almighty being in the world, that has the being of all other beings in itſelf; who firſt created theſe ſeveral ſpecies, and endued them with this generative power to propagate their kind. And this Supreme Being is that which we call God.

Hence it is, that there is not a leaf, no not a line, in this great book of the creation, wherein we may not clearly read the exiſtence and perfections of the great and glorious Creator, and that even by the glimmering light of nature. For, Who is it that bedecked yonder ſtately canopy of heaven, with thoſe gliſtering ſpangles, the ſtars? Who is it, that commands the ſun to run his courſe, and the moon ride her circuit ſo conſtantly about the world? Who is it that for-

med me ſo curiouſly in my mother's womb? Who is it, that gives my ſtomach power to digeſt ſuch variety of meats into chyle, and my heart or liver to turn them all to blood; and thence to ſend each particle to its proper place, and all to keep up this crazy carcaſs? Doubtleſs, theſe, and ſuch-like things, however ordinary or natural they may appear to us at preſent, are in themſelves very great and wonderful effects, that muſt, at firſt, be produced by ſome infinitely powerful and ſupernatural agent, the High and Mighty God, who is not only the chiefeſt of beings, but the Being of all beings whatſoever.

I ſay, the Being of all beings, becauſe whatſoever excellency or perfection is in any other thing, is eminently, yea, infinitely comprehended in him; ſo that he is not only the creatures perfection in the concrete, but in the abſtract too: He is not only all-wiſe, all-good, all-mighty, &c. but he is all-wiſdom, all-goodneſs, all-might, all-mercy, all-juſtice, all-glory, &c. And as he is the ocean and abyſs of all theſe perfections in himſelf; ſo is he the fountain of them all to us. Inſomuch that we have nothing, not ſo much as the leaſt moment of life, but what is communicated to us from this ever-living God. And not only what we poor ſinful worms are, or have, but even whatſoever thoſe nobler creatures the angels have, 'tis but a beam darted from this ſun, 'tis but a ſtream flowing from this overflowing fountain.

Liſt up thine eyes therefore, O my ſoul, and fix them a little upon this glorious object! How glorious, how tranſcendently glorious, muſt he needs be, who is the being of all beings, the perfection of all perfections, the very glory of all glories, the eternal God? He is the glory of love and goodneſs, who is good, and doth good continually unto me, tho' I be evil, and do evil continually againſt him. He is the glory of wiſdom and knowledge, unto whom all the ſecret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my ſoul, are exactly known and manifeſt. Never did a thought lurk ſo ſecretly in my heart, but that his all-ſeeing eye could eſpy it out: Even at this time, he knows what I am now thinking of, and what I am doing, as well as myſelf. And indeed, well may he know what I think and ſpeak, and do, when I can neither think, nor ſpeak, nor do any thing, unleſs himſelf be pleaſed to give me ſtrength to do it. He is the glory of might and power, who did but ſpeak the word, and there preſently went out that commanding power from him, by which this ſtately fabric of the world was formed and fa-

ſhioned. And as he created all things by the word of his power, ſo I believe he preſerves and governs all things by the power of the ſame word: Yea, ſo great is his power and ſovereignty, that he can as eaſily frown my ſoul from my body into hell, or nothing, as I can throw this book out of my hand to the ground: Nay, he need not throw me into nothing, but as if I ſhould let go my hold, the book would preſently fall; ſo ſhould God but take away his ſupporting hand from under me, I ſhould, of myſelf, immediately fall down to nothing. This, therefore, is that God, whom I believe to be the being of all beings; and ſo the *Creator, Preſerver, Governor* and *Diſpoſer of all things in the world.*

## ARTICLE II.

*I believe that whatſoever the moſt High GOD would have me to believe or do, in order to His Glory, and my Happineſs, He hath revealed to me in his holy Scriptures.*

UPON the ſame account that I believe there is a God, I believe likewiſe that this God is to be worſhipped; the ſame light that diſcovers the one, diſcovering the other too. And therefore it is, that as there is no nation or people in the world, but acknowledge ſome Deity, ſo there is none, but worſhip that Deity which they acknowledge; yea, tho' it be but a ſtick or a ſtone, yet if they fancy any thing of divinity in, they preſently perform worſhip and homage to it. Nay, that God is to be worſhipped, is a truth more generally acknowledged, than that there is a God. No nation, I confeſs, ever denied the latter, but no particular perſon ever denied the former: So that the very perſons, who through diabolical deluſions and their own prevalent corruptions have ſuſpected the exiſtence of a Deity, could not but acknowledge that he was to be worſhipped, if he did exiſt; worſhip being that which is contained in the very notion of a Deity; which is, that he is the being of all beings, upon whom all other things or beings do depend, and unto whom they are beholden both for their eſſence and ſubſiſtence. And if there be ſuch a being, that is the ſpring and fountain of all other beings, it is neceſſary that all other ſhould reverence and worſhip him, without whom they could not ſubſiſt. And therefore it is that men are generally more ſuperſtitious in their

worſhipping than they ought to be, rather than deny that worſhip to him, which they ought to give.

That, therefore, there is a God, and that this God is to be worſhipped, I do not doubt; but the great queſtion is, who is this God, whom I ought to worſhip? and, what is that worſhip, which I ought to perform unto him? The former I have reſolved upon in tbe foregoing article, as the light of reaſon and my natural conſcience ſuggeſted to me; the latter I am reſolved to ſearch out in this, *viz.* Which of all the ſeveral kinds of worſhip, that men perform to the Deity, and the ſeveral religions that men profeſs in the world, I had beſt make choice of to profeſs and adhere to. The general inclinations which are naturally implanted in my ſoul to ſome religion, it is impoſſible for me to ſhift off; but there being ſuch a multiplicity of religions in the world, I deſire now ſeriouſly to conſider with myſelf, which of them all to reſtrain theſe my general inclinations to.

And the reaſon of this my enquiry is, not that I am, in the leaſt, diſſatisfied with that religion I have already embraced; but becauſe it is natural for all men to have an over-bearing opinion and eſteem for that particular religion they are born and bred up in. That, therefore, I may not ſeem biaſſed by the prejudices of education, I am reſolved to prove and examine them all, that I may ſee and hold faſt to that which is beſt. For tho' I do not in the leaſt queſtion, but that I ſhall, upon enquiry, find the Chriſtian religion to be the only true religion in the world, yet I cannot ſay it, unleſs I find it upon good grounds to be ſo indeed: For, to profeſs myſelf a Chriſtian, and believe that Chriſtians are only in the right becauſe my forefathers were ſo, is no more than the Heathens and Mahometans have to ſay for themſelves.

Indeed, there never was any religion ſo barbarous and diabolical, but it was preferred before all other religion whatſoever, by them that did profeſs it; otherwiſe they would not have profeſſed it: The Indians that worſhip the devil, would think it a ſtrange doctrine to ſay, that CHRIST is to be feared more than the devil; as ſuch as believe in Chriſt, think it is to ſay, the devil is to be preferred before CHRIST. So do the Mahometans call all that do not believe in Mahomet as well as Chriſtians call thoſe that believe not CHRIST, Infidels. And why, ſay they, may not you be miſtaken as well as we? eſpecially when there is at leaſt ſix to one againſt your Chriſtian religion; all of which think they ſerve God aright, and expect happineſs thereby as well as you. So that

to be a Chriſtian, only upon the grounds of birth or education, is all one, as if I was a Turk or a Heathen, for if I had been born amongſt them, I ſhould have had the ſame reaſon for their religion, as now I have for my own: The premiſes are the ſame, though the concluſion be never ſo different. It is ſtill upon the ſame grounds that I profeſs religion, tho' it be another religion which I profeſs upon theſe grounds; ſo that I can ſee but very little difference, betwixt being a Turk by profeſſion, and a Chriſtian only by education, which commonly is the means and occaſion, but ought by no means to be the ground of any religion. And hence it is, that in my looking out for the trueſt religion, being conſcious to myſelf how great an aſcendant Chriſtianity hath over me, beyond the reſt, as being that religion whereinto I was born and baptized, that which the ſupreme authority has enjoined, and my parents educated me in, that which every one I meet with, highly approves of, that which I myſelf have, by a long continued profeſſion, made almoſt natural to me; I am reſolved to be more jealous and ſuſpicious of this religion than any of the reſt, and be ſure not to entertain it any longer without being convinced by ſolid and ſubſtantial arguments of the truth and certainty of it.

That, therefore, I may make diligent and impartial inquiry into all religions, and ſo find out the beſt, I ſhall for a time look upon myſelf as one not at all intereſted in any particular religion whatſoever, much leſs in the Chriſtian religion; but only as one who deſires, in general, to ſerve and obey him that made me, in a right manner, and thereby to be made partaker of that happineſs my nature is capable of. In order to this, it will be neceſſary to propoſe to myſelf ſome certain marks or characters, whereby I may be able to judge and make choice of the religion I intend to embrace: And they are, in general, theſe two, *viz.*

Firſt, That is the beſt religion, wherein God is worſhipped and ſerved moſt like himſelf, *i. e.* muſt ſuitably and conformably to his nature and will. And,

Secondly, Since all men naturally deſire and aſpire after happineſs, and our greateſt happineſs conſiſts in the fruition of God; that is certainly the beſt religon, which gives me the beſt and moſt comfortable aſſurances of being happy with God to all eternity.

To embrace a religion without theſe marks, would be worſe than to have no religion at all; for better it is to per-

form no worſhip to God, than ſuch as is diſpleaſing to him; to do him no ſervices than ſuch as will be ineffectual to make me happy, and not only fruſtrate my expectations of bliſs, but make me for ever miſerable.

The religion, then, that I am to look after, muſt be ſuch a one, wherein I may be ſure to pleaſe God, and to be made happy with him; and, by conſequence ſuch a one, wherein all the cauſe of his diſpleaſure and my miſery may be removed; and that is ſin. For ſin being infinitely oppoſite to him, as he is a being of infinite purity and holineſs, muſt certainly ſet me at the greateſt diſtance from him, and render me moſt odious in his ſight; and whatſoever does ſo, muſt make me as miſerable, as miſery can make me; for as our holineſs conſiſteth in likeneſs, ſo does our happineſs in nearneſs to God: And if it be our happineſs to be near unto him, it muſt certainly be our miſery to be at a diſtance from him. In enjoying him, we enjoy all things, he being and having all things in himſelf; and ſo in not enjoying him, we are not only deprived of all that we can enjoy, but liable to the puniſhments that are the conſequence of it.

That there is no ſuch thing in nature, as virtue and vice, as good and evil, as grace and ſin, is what I can by no means perſuade myſelf to; for my conſcience tells me, that there is: And not only mine, but every one that ever lived upon the face of the earth. All people of whatſoever nation or language, ſtill acknowledging ſin to be ſin, and that the diſpleaſing the Deity which they worſhip, is indeed an evil that ought to be carefully avoided. And therefore, the very Heathens did not only upbraid others with it, but likewiſe often checked themſelves for it: And all men naturally deſire to ſeem, though not to be holy. But let others ſay what they will, I, for my own part, cannot but ſee ſin in myſelf, by the very light of nature. For, my reaſon tells me, that if God be God, he muſt be juſt and perfect; and if I be not ſo too, I am not like unto him; and therefore muſt needs diſpleaſe him: It being impoſſible any thing ſhould pleaſe him, but what is like unto him. And this deformity to the will and nature of God, is that we call ſin, or which the word ſin in its proper notion, brings into my mind.

And being thus conſcious to myſelf, that I have ſinned againſt my maker, I may reaſonably conclude, that as he is omniſcient, and, by conſequence, a witneſs of theſe my offences, ſo muſt he likewiſe be juſt in the puniſhment of them;

for it cannot ſtand with his juſtice to put up with ſuch offences, without laying ſuitable puniſhment upon the offender. And theſe puniſhments muſt be infinite and eternal; for wherein doth the nature of divine juſtice conſiſt, but in giving to ſin its juſt puniſhments, as well as to virtue its due rewards? Now that the puniſhment of ſin in this world, is not ſo much as it deſerves, nor, by conſequence, as much as, in juſtice, ought to be laid upon it, to me is clear, in that every ſin being committed againſt an infinite God, deſerves infinite puniſhment; whereas all the puniſhments we ſuffer in this world cannot be any more than finite, the world itſelf being no more than finite, that we ſuffer them in.

Upon theſe grounds therefore it is, that I am fully ſatisfied in my conſcience, that I am a ſinner; that it cannot ſtand with the juſtice, nor the exiſtence of God that made me, to pardon my ſins, without ſatisfaction made to his divine juſtice for them; and yet, that unleſs they be pardoned, it is impoſſible for me to be happy here or hereafter. And therefore muſt I look after ſome religion, wherein I may be ſure, my ſins may be thus pardoned, and my ſoul made happy, wherein I may pleaſe God, and God may bleſs me. Which that I may be the better able to diſcover, I ſhall take a brief ſurvey of all the religions I ever heard of, or believe to be in the world.

Now, though there be as many kinds of religions as nations; yea, almoſt as particular perſons in the world; yet may they all be reduced to theſe four; the Paganiſh, Mahometan, Jewiſh, and Chriſtian religion.

As to the firſt, 'tis indeed of very large extent, and comprehends under it all ſuch as neither acknowledge Mahomet to be a prophet, nor expect a promiſed Meſſiah, nor believe in a crucified Jeſus: And ſince 'tis the majority of numbers that uſually carries the vogue, let me ſee whether the Paganiſh religion, being farther extended, and more generally profeſſed than any, or indeed, all the reſt, be not the true religion, wherein God is moſt rightly worſhipped, and I may be the moſt certainly ſaved. And here when I take a view of this religion, as it is diſperſed through ſeveral parts of Aſia, Africa, and America, I find them very devout in worſhipping their deities, ſuch as they are, and they have great numbers of them: Some worſhip the Sun, others the Moon and Stars, others the Earth and other elements, Serpents, Trees, and the like. And others again pay homage and adoration to images and ſtatues in the faſhion of men and women, hogs,

horſes, and other ſhapes; and ſome to the devil himſelf, as in Pegu, &c.

But now, to go no farther, this ſeems to me at firſt ſight, to be a very ſtrange and abſurd ſort of religion; or rather, it is quite the reverſe of it. For, the true notion we have of religion, is the worſhipping the true God in a true manner; and this is the worſhipping falſe gods, in a falſe manner. For, I cannot entertain any other notion of God, than as one ſupreme almighty being, who made and governs all things, and who, as he is a ſpirit, ought to be worſhipped in a ſpiritual manner. And therefore, as the very ſuppoſing more deities than one implies a contradiction; ſo the paying divine homage, in a groſs carnal manner, to material and corporeal beings, which are either the work of mens hands, or at beſt, but creatures like ourſelves, which can neither hear nor underſtand what we ſay to them, much leſs give us what we deſire of them, is not religion, but idolatry and ſuperſtition, or rather madneſs and deluſion. So that this religion, I ſee, if I ſhould embrace it, would be ſo far from making me happy, that the more zealous I ſhould be for it, the more miſerable I ſhould be by it. For, he that made theſe things, cannot but be angry at me, if I ſhould give that worſhip to them, which is only due to himſelf; and ſo, the way whereby I expect my ſins to be pardoned, they would be more increaſed; it being a ſin againſt the very light of nature, to prefer any thing before God, or to worſhip any thing in his ſtead; therefore leaving theſe to their ſuperſtitious idolatries, and diabolical deluſions, I muſt go and ſeek for the true religion ſomewhere elſe.

The next religion, that has the moſt ſuffrages and votes on its ſide, is the Mahometan religion, ſo called from one Mahomet, an Arabian, who about a thouſand years ago, by the aſſiſtance of our Sergius, a Neſtorian Monk, compiled a book in the Arabian tongue, which he called Alcoran, which he made the rule of his followers faith and manners, pretending that it was ſent from heaven to him, by the hand of the angel Gabriel.

This book I have peruſed, and muſt confeſs, find many things in it agreeable to right reaſon; as that there is but one God, gracious and merciful, the Lord of the whole univerſe; that this God we are to reſign ourſelves wholly to; that all that obey him ſhall be certainly rewarded, and all that diſobey him as certainly puniſhed; and the like. But yet, I dare not venture my ſoul upon it, nor become one of

the profeſſors of it; becauſe, as there are many things conſonant, ſo there are many things diſſonant to the natural light that is implanted in me; as, that God ſhould ſwear by Figs and Olives, by mount Sinai, as this book makes him to do, in the chapter of the Figs: that Solomon ſhould have an army compoſed of men, and devils, and birds; and that he ſhould diſcourſe with a bird, which acquainted him with the affairs of the Queen of Sheba, and the like.

As to the argument whereby he would perſuade us, that this book was ſent from God, *viz.* That there are no contradictions in it, I take it to be very falſe and frivolous. For beſides that there are many books compiled by men, which have no contradictions in them, it is certain, there are a great many plain contradictions in this book, which overthrow his ſuppoſitions. Thus, in the chapter of the *Table*, he ſaith, That *all that believe in God, and the reſurrection of the dead, and have done good works, ſhall be ſaved*; but in the chapter of *Gratification*, he ſaith, *All that do not believe in the Alcoran ſhall be deſtroyed*: and ſo in the chapter of *Hud*. In like manner, he tells us again, in the chapter of the Table, that the books of the old and new teſtament were ſent from God, and, at the ſame time ſuppoſes, that the Alcoran was ſent from him too; which to me ſeems impoſſible. For, my reaſon tells me, that God, who is truth and wiſdom itſelf, cannot be guilty of falſhood or contradiction. And if theſe books contradict one another, as it is evident they do in many inſtances; it is plain, God could not be the author of both; and by conſequence, if the Scriptures be true, the Alcoran muſt of neceſſity be falſe. To inſtance but in one particular, the Alcoran ſays, in the chapter of women, *God hath no* Son; the *Scripture*, in *Mat.* iii. 17. God ſaid of Jeſus, *This is my beloved* Son, *in whom I am well pleaſed*: And *Heb.* iv. 14. it expreſly calls that Jeſus, the *Son of God*; and ſo in many other things. Now it is impoſſible that both theſe ſhould be true, or, by conſequence, that That ſhould be true, which ſays both are ſo.

But if this were granted, there is ſtill another objection againſt this religion; and that is, that the rewards therein promiſed will not avail to make me happy, though I ſhould be partaker of them. For all the promiſes made to us in this paradiſe, are but mere ſenſual pleaſures; as that we ſhall have all manner of herbs and fruits, drinks, and women with exceeding great and black eyes, as in the chapter of the Merciful and of Judgment, and elſewhere; and ſuch

pleaſures as theſe, though they may, indeed, affect my body, yet they cannot be the happineſs of my ſoul. Indeed I know not how this book ſhould promiſe any higher happineſs than that of the body, becauſe it ſhews no means of attaining to it; it ſhews no way how my ſins may be pardoned, and ſo my ſoul made happy. It ſaith, I confeſs, that God is gracious, and merciful, and therefore will pardon them; but my reaſon tells me, that as God is gracious and merciful, and therefore will pardon ſin; ſo is he alſo juſt and righteous, and therefore muſt puniſh it. And how theſe two can ſtand together, is not manifeſted in the Alcoran; and therefore I dare not truſt my ſoul with it.

Thus upon diligent ſearch, have I found the two religions that are moſt generally profeſſed to have little or nothing of religion in them. I ſhall therefore, in the next place, take a view of that religion, which hath the feweſt followers, and that is the Jewiſh. A religion not eſtabliſhed by any human laws, nor, indeed, generally profeſſed in any nation, but only by a company of deſpicable people ſcattered up and down the world, which, as the prophet expreſſes it, *are become a proverb of reproach, and a bye-word among all nations whither they are driven.* The principles of this religion are contained in a book, written in the Hebrew tongue, which they call the TORAH, or law, compoſed of ſeveral precepts, promiſes, and threatenings; together with hiſtories of things paſt, and prophecies of things to come: This book, they ſay, was written by men inſpired by God himſelf; and therefore, they avouch it not to be of a human invention, but merely of divine inſtitution.

This book alſo I have diligently read and examined into, and muſt ingenuouſly confeſs, that at the very firſt glance, methought I read divinity in it, and could not but conclude from the majeſty of its ſtyle, the purity of its precepts, the harmony of its parts, the certainty of its promiſes, and the excellency of its rewards, that it could be derived from no other author but God himſelf. It is here only that I find my maker worſhipped under the proper notion of a Deity, as he is JEHOVAH, and that in the right manner, for we are here commanded ‘ to love and ſerve him with all our hearts, ‘ with all our ſouls, our might and mind,’ *Deut.* iv. 5. chap. x. 12. which is indeed the perfection of all true worſhip whatſoever. And as God is here worſhipped aright, ſo is the happineſs which is here entailed upon this true worſhip, the higheſt that ’tis poſſible a creature ſhould be made capable of,

being nothing leſs than the enjoyment of him we worſhip, ſo as to have him to be a God to us, and ourſelves to be a people to him, Jer. xxxi. 33.

But that which I look upon ſtill, as the ſureſt character of the true religion, is, its holding forth the way, how I, being a ſinner, can be inveſted with this happineſs; or how God can ſhew his juſtice, in puniſhing ſin in itſelf, and yet be ſo merciful, as to pardon and remit it to me, and ſo receive me to his favour; which the religions I viewed before did not ſo much as pretend to, nor offer at all at. And this is what this book of the law does likewiſe diſcover to me, by ſhewing, that God Almighty would not viſit our ſins upon ourſelves, but upon another perſon; that he would appoint and ordain one to be our ſponſor or mediator; who, by his infinite merit, ſhould bear and atone for our iniquities, and ſo ſhew his love and mercy, in juſtifying and acquitting us from our ſins, at the ſame time that he manifeſts his juſtice, in inflicting the puniſhment of them upon this perſon in our ſtead. A method ſo deep and myſterious, that if God himſelf had not revealed it, I am confident no mortal man could ever have diſcovered or thought of it!

Neither are there any doubts and ſcruples concerning this great myſtery, but what this book does clearly anſwer and reſolve; as will appear more plainly from a diſtinct conſideration of the ſeveral objections that are urged againſt it.

As, 1. *That it does not ſeem* agreeable, *either to* reaſon *or* ſcripture, *that* one *man ſhould bear the ſins of* another; *becauſe every man has enough to do to bear his* own *burden: And ſince ſin is committed againſt an* infinite *God*, and therefore *deſerves* infinite *puniſhment, how can any* finite *creature* bear *this* infinite *puniſhment? eſpecially it being due to ſo many thouſands of people as there are in the world!*

But this book ſufficiently unties this knot for me, by ſhewing me, that it is not a mere man, but God himſelf, that would bear theſe my ſins; even he, whoſe name is JEHOVAH Tzedikenow, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs*. Jer. xxxiii. 6. where the eſſential name of the moſt high God, which cannot poſſibly be given to any, but to him, who is the being of all beings, is here given to him, who ſhould thus bear my ſins, and juſtify my perſon; whence David alſo calleth him Lord, *Pſal.* cx. 19. Iſaiah calleth him *The mighty God*, Iſa. ix. 6. Yea, and the *Lord of Hoſts* himſelf, with his own mouth, calls him his fellow, *Zech.* xiii. 7.

*Obj.* 2. But my reaſon tells me, God is a pure act, and,

therefore, how can he ſuffer any puniſhment? Or, ſuppoſe he could, How can one nature ſatisfy for the offences of another? It was man that ſtood guilty; and how can it ſtand with the juſtice of God, not to puniſh man for the ſins he is guilty of?

To reſolve this doubt, this holy book aſſures me, That this God ſhould become man, expreſly telling me that as his name is *wonderful, counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting father, the prince of peace*, ſo ſhould he be born a child, and given as a ſon, *Iſa.* ix. 6. And, therefore, at the ſame time that the *Lord of Hoſts* calls him his Fellow, he calls him a man too, *Againſt the Man that is my Fellow*, ſays the *Lord of Hoſts*, Zech. xiii. 7.

*Obj.* 3. But if he be born, as other men are, he muſt needs be a ſinner, as other men be; for ſuch as are born by natural generation, muſt neceſſarily be born alſo in natural corruption.

To remove this obſtacle, this holy book tells me, That *a virgin ſhall conceive and bear this ſon, and his name ſhall be Emanuel*, Iſa. vii. 14. And ſo being begotten but not by a ſinful man, himſelf ſhall be a man, but not a ſinful man; and ſo being God and man, he is every way fit to mediate betwixt God and man; to reconcile God to me, and me to God, that my ſins may be pardoned, God's wrath appeaſed, and ſo my ſoul made happy in the enjoyment of him.

But there is one thing more yet, that keeps me from ſettling upon this religion; and that is the expiration of the time in which this book promiſeth this perſon ſhould come into the world; for it is expreſly ſaid, Dan. ix. 24. That *ſeventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſions, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion, and the prophecy, and to anoint the moſt holy*. From which anointing, he is, in the next verſe, called MESSIAH, the Anointed, (under which name he is from hence expected by the Jews) and the beginning of theſe ſeventy weeks is expreſly ſaid, v. 25. to be *at the going forth of the commandment to build and reſtore Jeruſalem*. Now if we underſtand theſe ſeventy weeks in the largeſt ſenſe for ſeventy weeks, or *ſabbaths of years*, as it is expreſſed *Lev.* xxv. 8. the time of the Meſſiah's coming muſt have been but 490 years after the commandment for the building of the city; whereas, whether we underſtand it of the decree and

commandment that Cyrus made, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 22, 23. *Ezra* i. 1, 2, 3. or that which Darius made, *Ezra* vi. or that Artaxerxes made, *chap.* vii. I ſay, whichſoever of theſe decrees we underſtand this prophecy of, it is evident, that it is above 2000 years ſince they were all made; and therefore, the time of this perſon's coming hath been expired above 1600 years at leaſt.

So likewiſe doth this book of the law, (as they call it) aſſure us, That the *ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,* Gen. xlix. 10. where the Jews themſelves, Jonathan and Onkelos, expound the word SHILOH and MESSIAH; and ſo doth the Jeruſalem Targum too. Now, it is plain that there hath been neither ſceptre nor lawgiver in Judah, nor any political government at all among the Jews, for above 1600 years; which plainly ſhews either their prophecies and expectations of a Meſſiah are falſe, or that he came into the world ſo many ages ſince, as were here prefixed.

So likewiſe it was expreſly foretold in this book, that *the glory of the ſecond Temple ſhould be greater than the glory of the former,* Hag. ii. 9. Now the Jews themſelves acknowledged that there were five of the principal things which were in the firſt wanting in the ſecond temple, *viz.* 1. The ark with the mercy-ſeat and cherubim. 2. The SCHECHINAH, or divine preſence. 3. The holy prophetical ſpirit. 4. The Urim and Thummim. 5. The heavenly fire: And from the want of theſe five things they ſay, the word ECBAR, *I will be glorified,* Hag. i. 8. wants an H at the end, which, in numeration, denotes five. Yet, and when the very foundation of the ſecond temple was laid, the old men that had ſeen the firſt, wept to ſee how far ſhort it was likely to come of the former, *Ezra* iii. 12. To make up, therefore, the glory of the ſecond temple to be greater than the glory of the firſt, notwithſtanding the want of ſo many glorious things, they muſt of neceſſity underſtand it of the coming of the Meſſiah into it, who, *v.* 8. is called, *the deſire of all nations.* Whereas the Jews themſelves cannot but confeſs, that this temple hath been demoliſhed above 1600 years; and, therefore, it is impoſſible for the Meſſiah to come into it, and ſo for its glory to be greater than the glory of the firſt temple; and by conſequence, for the word which they profeſs to believe in to be true.

Indeed, the time of the Meſſiah's coming was ſo expreſly ſet down in theſe and the like places, that Elias, one of their

great Rabbies, gathered from hence, that the world ſhould laſt 6000 years, 2000 without the law, 2000 under the law, and 2000 under the Meſſiah, *Sanh. c.* 11. which computation of the Meſſiah's coming after 4000 years, from the beginning of the world, comes near the time of the ſceptre's departing from Judah, and the end of Daniel's ſeventy weeks. Which ſhews that this Rabbi was fully convinced, that it was about that time that the Meſſiah ſhould come. And therefore it was, likewiſe, that above 1600 years ago, the Jews did ſo generally expect his coming; and that ſo many did pretend to be the perſon, as Bar-Coſbah, who, about that time, vaunting himſelf to be the man, almoſt the whole nation unanimouſly concurred in following him, inſomuch that, as the Jews report, there were no leſs than 400,000, or, as others, 500,000 men ſlain by Adrian the emperor, in the city Bitter, all fighting in defence of this pretended Meſſiah. There were likewiſe many others that fancied themſelves to be the man, and were eſteemed by ſome, till manifeſtly convinced of their error, as we may read in a book of theirs, called SCHEBISITORAH. And unto this day many of them hold, that he is already come, but that, by reaſon of their ſins, he is not yet revealed to them.

Hence it is, that my natural reaſon draws me into this dilemma, that either that book which the Jews receive as the word of God is indeed not ſo; or elſe that they do not rightly apply it: and ſo, that either their religion is a falſe religion, or elſe their profeſſion of it, a falſe profeſſion: and therefore I muſt go hence, and ſeek me another religion to fix my ſoul upon. Not as if my reaſon told me, that all the prophecies that I have mentioned here, were falſe in themſelves, but only that they appear ſo to this ſort of profeſſors, for, for my own part, I cannot ſhake off my faith in this law, which they profeſs to believe in; eſpecially now I have ſo ſeriouſly peruſed it, and ſo deliberately weighed and conſidered of it. Neither can I believe that ever any Mahometan or Indian, that did, without prejudice, ſet himſelf to read it thro', and examine every particular by the light of unbiaſſed reaſon, could ſay it was ever hatched in a human brain; but that indeed it is of a heavenly ſtamp and divine authority. And therefore, though I am forced by the ſtrength of reaſon to ſhake hands with this religion, yet the ſame reaſon will not ſuffer me to lay aſide that law, which they do profeſs, but only their profeſſion of it. So that whatſoever religion I ſettle upon, my natural conſcience ſtill commands me to ſtick

cloſe to this book of the Jewiſh law, and to receive and entertain it, as the word of the glorious Jehovah the being of all beings.

Well, there is but one religion more generally profeſſed in the world, that I am to ſearch into; which, if upon good grounds I cannot fix upon, I ſhall be the moſt miſerable of all creatures; and that is the Chriſtian religion, ſo named from JESUS CHRIST, whoſe doctrine, life, and death, are recorded by four ſeveral perſons in a book which they call the goſpel. And this book appears to me to be of undoubted authority, as to the truth and certainty of thoſe things that are therein recorded. For, if they had been falſe, both the perſons that wrote them, and he of whom they wrote, had ſo many malicious enemies ready upon all occaſions to accuſe them, that they had long ago been condemned for lyes and forgeries. But now, theſe writings having been extant for above 1600 years, and never ſo much as ſuſpected, but even by the worſt of enemies acknowledged to be a true relation of what paſſed in the world about that time; my reaſon will not permit me to be their firſt accuſer, but enjoins me to receive them, under that notion in which they have been brought down to me through ſo many generations, without any interruption whatſoever. For this general reception on all hands, is a ſufficient ground for me to build my faith upon, as to the ttuth of the relation, though not a ſufficient ground to believe every thing contained in the book to be the word of God himſelf; for, in this particular, it is not the teſtimony of others that I am to build upon, but its own: I may read its verity in man's teſtimony, but its divinity only in its own doctrines.

This book, therefore, I have alſo diligently peruſed, and find it expreſly aſſerts that Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe life and death it records, was indeed that perſon, who was long promiſed by God, and expected by the Jews: And that all the prophecies under the old law concerning that Meſſiah God-Man, were actually fulfilled in this perſon; which, if upon diligent ſearch, I can find to be true, I ſhall preſently ſubſcribe, both with hand and heart, to this religion. It is a comfort to me, that it acknowledges the Jewiſh law to be ſent from God; for, truly, if it did not, my conſcience would ſcarce permit me to give any credit to it; being ſo fully convinced, that That book is indeed of a higher extract than human invention, and of greater authority than human inſtitution. And therefore it is, that I cannot, I dare not believe, but that every

particular prophecy contained in it, either is, or ſhall be certainly fulfilled according to every circumſtance of time and place mentioned therein; and by conſequence, that this prophecy in particular, concerning the Meſſiah's coming, is already paſt; the time wherein it was foretold he ſhould come being ſo long ago expired. So that I do not now doubt, whether the Meſſiah be come or no, but whether this Jeſus Chriſt, whom this book of the goſpel ſpeaks of, was indeed the perſon. And this I ſhall beſt find out by comparing the Chriſtian's goſpel with the Jewiſh law, or the hiſtories of Chriſt under the one, with the prophecies of the Meſſiah under the other, ſtill concluding, that if whatſoever was foretold concerning the Meſſiah, was fulfilled in this Jeſus Chriſt, then indeed he was the Meſſiah that was to come into the world. And, to make this compariſon the more exact, I ſhall run through the ſeveral circumſtances that attended his birth, life, death, reſurrection and aſcenſion, and ſhew how punctually the prophecies were fulfilled in every particular.

And firſt, for the birth of the Meſſiah, the law ſaith, he was to be born of the ſeed of Abraham, Gen. xxii. 18. and David, 2 Sam. vii. and of the ſtem of Jeſſe, Iſa. xi. 1. from whence he is frequently called by the Jews, BAR-DAVID, the ſon of David. The goſpel ſaith Jeſus Chriſt *was the ſon of David, the ſon of Abraham*, Matth. i. 1. The law, that he was to be born of a virgin, *Iſa.* vii. The goſpel, that *Mary, a virgin, brought forth this* Jeſus. *Mat.* i. 18. *Luke* i. 17, 31, 35. chap. ii. 5, 6, 7. The law, that *He was to be born at Bethlehem Ephrata, Mic.* v. 2. The *Goſpel*, that this Jeſus was born there, *Mat.* ii. 11. *Luke* ii. 5, 6.

The law ſays, that he was to be *brought out of Egypt, Hoſ.* ix. 1. The *Goſpel*, that Jeſus was called thence, *Mat.* ii. 19, 20. The law ſaith, that *one ſhould go before the Meſſiah*, Mal. iii. 5. and ſhould *cry in the wilderneſs*, Iſa. xl. 3. The *Goſpel*, that John Baptiſt did ſo before Chriſt, *Mat.* iii. 1, 2. *Mark* i. 2, 3. The law, that the Meſſiah ſhould *preach the doctrine of ſalvation in Galilee*, who ſitting before in darkneſs ſhould ſee great light, *Iſa.* ix. 1, 2. The goſpel, that Jeſus did ſo, *Mat.* iv. 12. 23. The law, that in the Meſſiah's days, *the eyes of the blind ſhould be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhould be unſtopped, and the lame leap, and tongue of the dumb ſing*, Iſa. xxxv. 5, 6. The goſpel, that it was ſo in the days of Jeſus Chriſt, *Matth.* iv. 23. chap. xi. 5. But for all theſe wonders and miracles, the

law ſaith, they *ſhould hear and not underſtand, and ſee yet not perceive*, Iſa. vi. 9. And the goſpel, that *ſeeing they did not ſee, and hearing they did not hear, neither did they underſtand*, Mat. xiii. 13. Mark iv. 12. The law, that he ſhould be *deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief*, Iſa. liii. 3. The goſpel, that Jeſus Chriſt *had no where to lay his head*, Mat. viii. 20. *His ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful even unto death*, Mat. xxvi. 38. yea, he was in *an agony*, and his *ſweat was as drops of blood*, Luke xxii. 24. So well was he acquainted with grief. The law ſays, that he ſhould ride into *Jeruſalem upon an aſs, and upon a colt, the ſole of an aſs*, Zech. ix. 9. And the goſpel, that Jeſus Chriſt, *as he was going to Jeruſalem, having found an aſs, ſat thereon*, John xii. 14. Mat. xxi. 6. At which time, the law ſaith, the people ſhould cry, *Hoſannah, bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, Pſal. cxviii. 26. The goſpel, that the multitude did ſo to Chriſt, *Mat.* xxi. 9. The law, that *one of his own familiar friends, in whom he truſted, which did eat of his bread, ſhould lift up his heel againſt him*, Pſal. xli. 9. The goſpel, that Judas, who was one of Chriſt's diſciples, and ſo eat of his bread, did betray him into the hands of the Jews, *Mat.* xxvi. 47. *Luke* xxii. 46. The law, that he ſhould be *prized at, and ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver*, with which ſhould be *bought the potter's field*, Zech. xi. 12, 13. The goſpel, that they covenanted with Judas, to betray Jeſus for thirty pieces of ſilver, *Mat.* xxvi. 15. with which they afterwards *bought the potter's field*, chap. xxvii. 7. The law, that he *ſhould be numbered amongſt tranſgreſſors*, Iſa. liii. 12. The goſpel, that Jeſus was *crucified betwixt two thieves*, *Mark* xv. 17. *Mat.* xxvii. 38. The law, that he *ſhould be wounded and bruiſed*, Iſa. liii. 5. The goſpel, that they ſcourged Jeſus, *Mat.* xxvii. 10. and ſmote him, *Mark* xv. 19. The law ſaith, they ſhould *pierce his hands and feet*, Pſalm xxii. 16. *Zech.* xxii. 10. The goſpel, that they crucified Jeſus, *Mat.* xxvii. 35. *Luke* xxiii. which was a death, wherein they uſed to pierce the hands and feet of thoſe that were put to death, and nailed them to the croſs. But though they ſhould pierce his fleſh, yet the law ſaith, that they ſhould not break his bones, no not one of them, *Exod.* xii. 46. *Num.* xi. 12. *Pſal.* xxxiv. 20. The goſpel, they broke not the legs of Chriſt, *John* xix. 33, 36. The law, that they who ſhould *ſee him, ſhould laugh him to ſcorn, ſhoot out their lips and ſhake their heads, ſaying, he truſted in the Lord that he would*

*deliver him, let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighted in him*, *Pſal.* xxii. 8. The goſpel, that the ſcribes and elders did ſo to Chriſt, *Mat.* xxvii. 42, 43. The law ſaith, they ſhould *give him gall for meat, and vinegar to drink*, *Pſal.* xcvi. 21. and the goſpel, that they gave Chriſt *vinegar to drink mingled with gall*, *Mat.* xxvi. 34, 48. The law, that they ſhould *part his garments amongſt them, and caſt lots for his veſture*, *Pſal.* xxii. 19. The goſpel, that they *parted* Jeſus's *garments, caſting lots*, Mat. xxvii. 35. *John* x. 23. Mark xv. 24.

And as for the time of this Jeſus's coming into the world, it is certain, that this Jeſus came before the ſecond temple was demoliſhed; for it is ſaid, that *he went into it*, Mat. xix. 45. yea, himſelf *taught daily in it*, ver. 47. by which means the *glory of the ſecond was greater than the glory of the firſt*, according to the prophecy, *Hag.* ii. 9. And as for Jacob's prophecy, *that the ſceptre ſhould not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver, till Shiloh, or the Meſſiah, came*, Gen. xlix. 10. it is certain, that it did not depart from Judah, till Herod, by the ſenate of Rome, was made King of Judea, in whoſe days this Jeſus was born, *Mat.* ii. 1. *Luke* i. 5. And ſo did Daniel's ſeventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years exactly reach unto, and were determined in, the days of Jeſus; as might eaſily be demonſtrated. So that all the old prophecies, concerning the time of the Meſſiah's coming, are perfectly fulfilled in this Jeſus of Nazareth.

But farther, the law ſaith, that tho' the Meſſiah ſhould be crucified, *yet God will not leave his ſoul in hell, nor ſuffer his holy one to ſee corruption*, Pſal. xvi. 10. and that *when God ſhould make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhould ſee his ſeed and prolong his days*, Iſa. liii. 10. which plainly implies, that though the Meſſiah ſhould die, yet he ſhould riſe again, and that within few days too, otherways he would have ſeen corruption. Now the goſpel ſaith, that this Jeſus *roſe from the dead*, Mat. xxviii. 6. *Luke* xxiv. 6. and that he was ſeen of ſeveral, *after his reſurrection, as of Mary Magdalen*, Mat. xxviii. 9. *of the eleven diſciples*, ver. 16, 17, 18. Mark xvi. 14. of the *two that were going to Emmaus* Luke xxiv. 13, 14, 15. of Peter, ver. 34. and of the *diſciples that were gathered together, the door being ſhut*, John xx. 19. And to be ſure it was himſelf, and not an apparition, Thomas, one of the twelve, *thruſt his hands into his ſide*, and found it fleſh and blood indeed, as before, *John* xx. 27. *And he eat before them*, Luke xx. 43. which it was impoſſible for a ſpirit

to do; yea, *he was ſeen of above five hundred at one time*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. and of Paul himſelf, ver. 8. Neither did he lie ſo long as to ſee corruption, for he was buried but *the day before the ſabbath*. Mark xv. 42. and roſe the day after, chap. xvi. 1.

Laſtly, He was not only to riſe again, but the law ſaith, *He was to aſcend on high, to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men*, Pſal. lxviii. 18. Now this cannot but be an undoubted character of the Meſſiah, not only to riſe from the dead, but aſcend up to heaven, and thence to diſperſe his gifts amongſt the children of men; and that Jeſus did ſo, is likewiſe evident from the goſpel; for, *after he had ſpoken with them, he was received up into heaven, and there ſat at the right hand of God*, Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 51. And he gave ſuch gifts to men, as that his diſciples, of a ſudden, were enabled to *ſpeak all manner of languages*, Acts ii. 8. to *work many ſigns and wonders*, chap. v. 12. *to heal all manner of diſeaſes*, ver. 15, 16. yea, with a word-ſpeaking, *to cure a man lame from his mother's womb*, chap. iii. 6, 7.

Thus the goſpel ſeems to me to be a perfect tranſcript of the law, and the hiſtories of Jeſus nothing elſe but the prophecies of Chriſt turned into a hiſtory. And when to this I join the conſideration of the piety of the life which this man led, the purity of the doctrine which he taught, and the miraculouſneſs of the works he wrought, I cannot but be further confirmed in the truth of what is here related: For the miracles which he wrought, as the *healing of the ſick with a word of his mouth, raiſing of the dead, feeding ſo many thouſands with five loaves*, and the like, were ſo powerful and convincing, that his very enemies, that would not believe him to be the Meſſiah, could ſcarce deny him to be a God, *Joſeph. Antiq. l.* xviii. *c.* 4. And it is, to this day, a tenet amongſt ſome of them, that the miracles, which Jeſus did, were not the deluſions and jugglements of the devil, but real miracles wrought, as they ſay, by the virtue of the name of God, JEHOVAH, which he had gotten out of the temple. By which 'tis plain, they acknowledged God to be the author of them, which I cannot ſee how he ſhould be, unleſs they were agreeable to his will, and for the glory of his name.

Neither was the doctrine of the goſpel only eſtabliſhed at the firſt, but likewiſe propagated by miracles afterwards, as it was neceſſary it ſhould be. For, if it had been propagated without miracles, that itſelf had been the greateſt miracle of

all. It was, no doubt, a great miracle, that a doctrine ſo much contrary to fleſh and blood, ſhould be propagated by any means whatſoever; but a far greater, that it ſhould be propagated by a company of ſimple and illiterate men, who had neither power to force, nor eloquence to perſuade men to the embracing of it. For, who would have thought that ſuch perſons as theſe were, ſhould ever make any of the Jews, who expected a king for their Meſſiah, to advance them to temporal dignities, believe, that That Jeſus, whom themſelves ſcourged and crucified at Jeruſalem, was the perſon? Or, that they ſhould be able to propagate the goſpel amongſt the Gentiles alſo, who neither believed in the true God, nor expected any thing of a Meſſiah to come and redeem them? But this they did, and brought over, not only many perſons, but whole nations and countries to the profeſſion of the goſpel; propagating this moſt holy doctrine amongſt the moſt barbarous and ſinful people in the world, maugre all the oppoſition that the world, the fleſh, and the devil, could make againſt it. Now, can any man, that exerciſeth his reaſon, think they did all this purely by their own ſtrength? No ſure, none of theſe wonderful effects could ever have been produced by any thing elſe than the wiſdom, and power, and faithfulneſs of their Lord and Maſter, whoſe ſervice they were engaged in, and who promiſed to be with them *to the end of the world*, Mat. xxviii. 20. Queſtionleſs, it was nothing elſe but the ſpirit of the moſt high God, that went along with them, and accompanied the word they preached; otherways it could never have made ſuch deep impreſſion upon the hearts of them that heard it, as not only to command their attention, but to hinder them from reſiſting, when they ſtrove and endeavoured to do it, the power and authority by which the diſciples ſpake.

And now, methinks, I begin to perceive this divine ſpirit is come upon me too, and ſeems, by its powerful influence, to be working up my heart into a thorough perſuaſion, that it is Chriſt, and Chriſt alone, I am to caſt my ſoul upon; that it is he alone, that is the way to life, and his word alone, the word of life, which *whoſoever believes, and is baptized into, ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* Away then with your Paganiſh idolatries, your Mahometan ſuperſtitions, and Jewiſh ceremonies; it is the Chriſtian religion alone I am reſolved to live and die in, becauſe 'tis this alone in which I am taught to worſhip God aright, to obtain the pardon and remiſſion of my ſins, and to be made eternal-

ly happy. And, ſince all its doctrine and precepts are contained in the holy ſcriptures, it is neceſſary that I ſhould aſſent unto them, as a ſtanding revelation of God's will, and an eternal treaſure of divine knowledge; whereby all that ſincerely believe in Chriſt, may be ſufficiently inſtructed, as well as thoroughly furniſhed, unto every good word and work.

Without any more ado, therefore, I believe, and am verily perſuaded, that all the books of the antient law, with all thoſe that have been received into the canon of the ſcripture by the church of God, ſince the coming of Chriſt, which we call the New Teſtament; I ſay, that all theſe books, from the beginning of Geneſis to the end of the Revelations, are indeed the word of the eternal God, dictated by his own Spirit, unto ſuch as himſelf was pleaſed to employ in the writing of them; and that they contain in them a perfect and complete rule of faith and manners; upon the due obſervance of which, I cannot fail of worſhipping and ſerving God, in ſuch a manner, as will be acceptable to him here, and of enjoying hereafter *thoſe exceeding great and precious promiſes*, that he has reſerved in heaven for ſuch as do ſo.

Unto theſe books, therefore, of the law and goſpel, I am reſolved by his grace that wrote them, to conform all the enſuing articles of my faith, and all the actions and reſolutions of my life. Inſomuch that whatſoever I find it hath pleaſed his Sacred Majeſty herein to aſſert, I believe it is my duty to believe; and whatſoever he hath been pleaſed to command me, I believe it is my duty to perform.

## ARTICLE III.

*I believe, that as there is one GOD, ſo this one GOD is there Perſons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.*

THIS, I confeſs, is a myſtery which I cannot poſſibly conceive, yet it is a truth which I can eaſily believe; yea, therefore, it is ſo true, that I can eaſily believe it; becauſe it is ſo high, that I cannot poſſibly conceive it; for it is impoſſible any thing ſhould be true of the infinite Creator, which can be fully expreſſed to the capacities of a finite creature: And, for this reaſon, I ever did, and ever ſhall, look upon thoſe apprehenſions of God to be the trueſt, whereby we apprehend him to be the moſt incomprehenſible: and that to be the moſt true of God, which ſeems moſt impoſſible unto us.

Upon this ground, therefore, it is, that the myſteries of

the goſpel, which I am leſs able to conceive, I think myſelf the more obliged to believe; eſpecially this myſtery of myſteries, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, which I am ſo far from being able to comprehend, or indeed to apprehend, that I cannot ſet myſelf ſeriouſly to think of it, or to ſcrew up my thoughts a little concerning it, but I immediately loſe myſelf, as in a trance, or extacy: That God the Father ſhould be one perfect God of himſelf, God the Son one perfect God of himſelf, and God the Holy Ghoſt one perfect God of himſelf; and yet that theſe three ſhould be but one perfect God of himſelf; ſo that One ſhould be perfectly three, and Three perfectly one; that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt ſhould be three, and yet but One; but One and yet Three! O heart-amazing, thought-devouring, unconceivable myſtery! Who cannot believe it to be true of the glorious Deity? certainly, none but ſuch as are able to apprehend it, which, I am ſure, I cannot, and believe, no other creature can. And, becauſe no creature can poſſibly conceive how it ſhould be ſo, I therefore believe it really to be ſo, *viz.* That the being of all beings is but one in eſſence, yet three in ſubſtance; but one nature, yet three perſons; and that thoſe three perſons in that one nature, though abſolutely diſtinct from one another, are yet but the ſame God. And I believe, theſe three perſons, in this one nature, are indeed to one another as they are expreſſed to be to us, that the one is really a Father to the other, that the other is really a Son to him, the third the product of both: and yet, that there is neither firſt, ſecond, nor third amongſt them, either in time or nature. So that he that begat was not at all before him that was begotten, nor he that proceeded from them both, any whit after either of them. And therefore, that God is not termed Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as if the Divine nature of the one ſhould beget the Divine nature of the ſecond: or the Divine nature of the firſt and ſecond ſhould iſſue forth the Divine nature of the third; (for then there would be three Divine natures, and ſo three Gods eſſentially diſtinct from one another; by this means alſo, only the Father would be truly God, becauſe he only would be eſſentially of and from himſelf, and the other two from him:) But what I think myſelf obliged to believe, is, that it was not the Divine nature, but the Divine perſon of the Father which did, from eternity, beget the Divine perſon of the Son; and from the Divine perſons of the Father and of the Son, did, from eternity, proceed the Divine perſon of the Holy Ghoſt; and ſo one not being before the other, in

time or nature, as they are from eternity three perfectly distinct persons, so they are but one co-essential God. But dive not, O my soul, too deep into this bottomless ocean, this abyss of mysteries! It is the Holy of Holies, presume not to enter into it; but let this suffice thee, that he, who best knows himself, hath avouched it to himself, and therefore thou oughtest to believe it. See *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* And again, 1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One.*

## ARTICLE IV.

*I believe that I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity; and that, ever since, I have been continually conceiving mischief, and bringing forth vanity.*

THIS article of my faith I must of necessity believe, whether I will or no; for if I could not believe it to be true, I should therefore have the more cause to believe it to be so; because unless my heart was naturally very sinful and corrupt, it would be impossible for me not to believe that which I have so much cause continually to bewail; or, if I do not bewail it, I have still the more cause to believe it; and, therefore am so much the more persuaded of it, by how much the less I find myself affected with it. For certainly I must be a hard-hearted wretch indeed, steeped in sin, and fraught with corruption to the highest, if I know myself so oft to have incensed the wrath of the most high God against me, as I do, and yet not be sensible of my natural corruption, nor acknowledge myself to be by nature a child of wrath, as well as others. For, I verily believe, that the want of such a due sense of myself argues as much original corruption, as murder and whoredom do actual pollution. And, I shall ever suspect those to be most under the power of that corruption, that labour most by arguments to divest it of its power.

And, therefore, for my own part, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to go about to confute that by wilful arguments, which I find so true by woeful experience. If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation? Alas! I can neither set my hand nor heart about any thing, but I still shew myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents, by being the sinful

parent of a ſinful offſpring. Nay, I do not only betray the in-bred venom of my heart, by poiſoning my common actions, but even my moſt religious performances alſo, with ſin. I cannot pray, but I ſin; nay, I cannot hear or preach a ſermon, but I ſin; I cannot give an alms, or receive the ſacrament, but I ſin; nay, I cannot ſo much as confeſs my ſins, but my very confeſſions are ſtill aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want waſhing, and the very waſhing of my tears needs ſtill to be waſhed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worſt of my ſins, but even the beſt of my duties, ſpeak me a child of Adam: Inſomuch, that whenſoever I reflect upon my paſt actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of ſin.

And whence can ſuch a continued ſtream of corruption flow, but from the corrupt ciſtern of my heart? And whence can that corrupt ciſtern of my heart be filled, but from the corrupt fountain of my nature? Ceaſe therefore, O my ſoul, to gainſay the power of original ſin within thee, and labour now to ſubdue it under thee. But, why do I ſpeak of my ſubduing this ſin myſelf? ſurely, this would be both an argument of it, and an addition to it. *It is to thee, O my God, who art both the ſearcher and cleanſer of hearts, that I deſire to make my moan! It is to thee I cry out in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? Who ſhall? Oh! Who can do it, but thyſelf. Ariſe thou, therefore, O my God, and ſhew thyſelf as infinitely merciful in the pardoning, as thou art infinitely powerful in the purging away of my ſins.*

## ARTICLE V.

*I believe the Son of God became the Son of Man, that I, the Son of Man, might become the Son of God.*

OH! how comfortably does this raiſe me from the loweſt abaſement of ſin and miſery, which I have before acknowledged to be my natural ſtate, to the higheſt exaltation of happineſs and glory, in a ſpiritual one! This is that great article of faith, by which all the benefits of our Saviour's death and paſſion are made over to me in the new covenant, and by which, if I perform the conditions therein required, I ſhall not only be retrieved from the bondage and corruption

that is inherent in me, as a child of wrath, but be juſtified and accepted as the ſon of God, and be made a joint heir with Chriſt. This is a point of the greateſt moment, and concern, which, by the grace and aſſiſtance of him of whom I ſpeak, and in whom I thus believe, I ſhall therefore be the more exact and particular in the ſearching and examining into.

Now, when I ſay, and believe, that God became man, I do not ſo underſtand it, as if the Divine nature took upon it a human perſon, but that a Divine perſon took upon him the human nature, *i. e.* it was not the Divine nature, in general, without reſpect to the perſons, but one of the perſons in the Divine nature, which took fleſh upon him, and yet, to ſpeak preciſely, it was not the Divine perſon abſtracted or diſtinct from the Divine nature, but it was the Divine nature in that perſon which thus took upon it the human. And this was not the firſt or third, but the ſecond perſon only in the Sacred Trinity, that thus aſſumed our nature; and, conſidering the myſterious order and œconomy of the Divine perſons, it ſeems to be neceſſary that it ſhould.

For, firſt, the Father could not have become this Son of man, becauſe, then, he, that had begotten from eternity, ſhould have been begotten in time; by which means, as he was the Father to the Son, ſo would the Son alſo have been the Father unto him; and ſo the order betwixt the Father and Son deſtroyed.

Nor, ſecondly, could the Holy Ghoſt have taken our nature upon him, becauſe the bond of perſonal union betwixt the Divine and human nature is from the Spirit, (and thence it is, that every one that is partaker of Chriſt's perſon is partaker of his ſpirit alſo) which could not be if the Spirit itſelf had been the perſon aſſuming. For, I cannot conceive, how the ſame perſon could unite itſelf, by itſelf, to the aſſumed nature: And therefore we read, that in the virgin's conception of our Saviour, it was neither the Father nor the Son himſelf, but the Spirit of the Moſt High, which did overſhadow her. *Luke* i. 35.

And, farther, if the Holy Ghoſt had been my Redeemer, who ſhould have been my Sanctifier? if he had died perſonally for me, who ſhould have applied his death effectually to me? That I could not do it myſelf is, beyond contradiction, evident; and that either the Father, or the Son, ſhould do it, is not agreeable to the nature or order of the Divine operations; they, as I believe, never acting any thing *ad extra*, perſonally, but by the Spirit proceeding from them both. And

therefore it is, that Chriſt, to comfort his diſciples after his death, promiſeth them in his life-time, that he would ſend them the Comforter, *John* xvi. 7. *which is the ſpirit of truth*, ver. 13. He doth not ſay he will come again perſonally, but myſtically to them, by his ſpirit.

But now, that the Spirit, whoſe office it is to apply the merit and mediation of God-Man to me could not have done it, if himſelf had been that God-Man, ſeems to me as clear and manifeſt as the other: For, if he had done it, he ſhould either have done it by the Father, by the Son, or by Himſelf. He could not do it by the Father, nor the Son, becauſe he does nothing by them, but all things from them. The Father acts in the Son by the Spirit, the Son from the Father by the Spirit, the Spirit from the Father and the Son. And therefore it likewiſe follows, that as the Spirit could not unite itſelf before, ſo neither can it apply itſelf here, to the Human Nature; for, to aſſume the Human Nature into the Divine, and to apply the Divine Nature to the Human, are two diſtinct offices; and, therefore, to be performed by two diſtinct perſons. The firſt could have been done only by one that was really man, as well as God; the other, only by one that was merely God, and not Man.

And that muſt needs be ſo; for, otherwiſe, God ſhould act upon Man by Man, by the perſon Man, as well as God; and, by conſequence, all the diſpenſations, of his grace towards us, would have been ſtopped in the frailty of the human, though perfect nature. So that it would have availed me nothing, if the Spirit had taken my nature upon him; becauſe, though he had aſſumed the human, I could not thence have participated of the Divine nature; nay, therefore, I could not have participated of this, becauſe he had aſſumed that, by which alone I could be brought into this capacity; and ſo by this means, I ſhould be farther off than I was before.

And laſtly, as, if the Father had become man, there would have been two Fathers; ſo if the Spirit had become man, there would have been two Sons, the ſecond perſon begotten from eternity, and the third perſon begotten in time. But now, by the Son's taking our nature upon him, theſe and far greater difficulties are avoided, which we might eaſily perceive, could we ſufficiently dive into the depth of that wiſdom of the Father, in ſending his Son, rather than his Spirit, or coming himſelf in his own perſon. However, to us, it cannot but ſeem moſt equitable, (if reaſon may hold the balance) that he, who is the middle perſon, between the

Father and the Spirit, ſhould become the mediator betwixt God and man; and that he, who is the Son of God in the glorious Trinity, ſhould become the Son of man in his gracious Myſtery.

But, on the other ſide, as it was not the Divine Nature, but a Divine Perſon that did aſſume, ſo neither was it a Human Perſon, but the Human Nature that was aſſumed; for otherwiſe, if he had aſſumed the perſon of any one man in the world, his death had been beneficial to none but him, whoſe perſon he thus aſſumed and repreſented. Whereas, now that he has aſſumed the nature of man in general, all, that partake of that nature, are capable of partaking of the benefit he purchaſed for us, by dying in our ſtead. And thus under each Adam, as the repreſentation was univerſal, ſo were the effects deſigned to be: *For as in* Adam *all died, even ſo in* Chriſt *ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Again, when I ſay, the Son of God became the Son of Man, I do not mean, as if, by this, he ſhould ceaſe to be what he was before, the Son of God, for he did not leave his Godhead to take upon him the Manhood; but I believe he took the Manhood into his Godhead; he did not put off the one to put on the other, but he put one upon the other: Neither do I believe that the Human Nature, when aſſumed into the Divine, ceaſed to be Human; but as the Divine Perſon ſo aſſumed the Human Nature, as ſtill to remain a Divine Perſon, ſo the Human Nature was ſo aſſumed into a Divine Perſon, as ſtill to remain a Human Nature: God, therefore, ſo became Man, as to be both perfectly God, and perfectly Man, united together in one perſon.

I ſay, in one perſon; for if he ſhould be God and Man in diſtinct perſons, this would avail me no more, than if he ſhould be God only, and not Man, or Man only, and not God; becauſe the merit and value both of his active and paſſive obedience is grounded merely upon the union of the two natures in one and the ſame perſon. He therefore, by his life and death, merited ſo much for us, becauſe the ſame perſon, that ſo lived and died, was God, as well as Man; and every action that he did, and every paſſion that he ſuffered, was done and ſuffered by him that was God, as well as Man. And hence it is, that Chriſt, of all the perſons in the world, is ſo fit, yea, only fit, to be my Redeemer, Mediator, and Surety; becauſe he alone is both God and Man in one perſon. If he was not Man, he could not undertake that office; if he was not God, he could not perform it; if he was not

Man, he could not be capable of being bound for me: if he was not God, he would not be able to *pay my debt*. It was Man by whom the covenant was broken; and, therefore, Man muſt have ſuitable puniſhment laid upon him: It was God with whom it was broken; and, therefore, God muſt have ſufficient ſatisfaction made unto him: And, as for that ſatisfaction, it was Man that had offended, and, therefore, Man alone could make it ſuitable; it was God that was offended, and, therefore, God alone could make it ſufficient.

The ſum of all this is: Man can ſuffer, but he cannot ſatisfy; God can ſatisfy, but he cannot ſuffer; but Chriſt being both God and Man, can both ſuffer and ſatisfy too; and ſo is perfectly fit both to ſuffer for Man, and to make ſatisfaction unto God, to reconcile God to Man, and Man to God. And thus, Chriſt having aſſumed my nature into his perſon, and ſo ſatisfied Divine Juſtice for my ſins, I am received into grace and favour again with the moſt high God.

Upon this principle, I believe, that I, by nature the Son of man, am made, by grace, the Son of God, as really as Chriſt, by nature the Son of God, was made by office, the Son of Man: And ſo, tho' in myſelf, *I may ſay to corruption thou art my mother*, yet in Chriſt I may ſay to God, *Abba Father*. Neither do I believe this to be a metaphorical expreſſion, *viz.* becauſe he doth that for me, which a father doth for his child, even provide for me whilſt young, and give me my portion, when come to age; but I believe, that in the ſame propriety of ſpeech that my earthly father was called the father of my natural ſelf, is God the father of my ſpiritual ſelf: For, why was my earthly father called my father, but becauſe that I, as to my natural being, was born of what proceeded from him, *viz.* his ſeed? Why ſo, as to my ſpiritual being, am I born of what proceeds from God, his Spirit: And as I was not born of the very ſubſtance of my natural parents, but only of what came from them; ſo neither is my ſpiritual ſelf begotten again, quickened and conſtituted of the very ſubſtance of my heavenly Father, God, but of the Spirit and Spiritual Influences proceeding from him. Thus, therefore, it is, that I believe, that Chriſt, the Son of God, became the Son of Man; and thus it is, that I believe myſelf the ſon of man to be made, thereby, the Son of God. *I believe*, O my God and Father, *do thou help mine unbelief! and every day more and more increaſe my faith, till itſelf ſhall be done away, and turned into the moſt perfect viſion and fruition of thine own glorious Godhead!*

## ARTICLE VI.

*I believe that Chriſt lived to GOD, and died for ſin, that I might die to ſin, and live with GOD.*

AND thus, by faith, I follow my Saviour from the womb to the tomb, from his incarnation to his death and paſſion, believing all that he did or ſuffered, to be for my ſake; for Chriſt did not only take my nature upon him, but he ſuffered and obeyed; he underwent miſeries, and undertook duties for me; ſo that not only his paſſive, but likewiſe his active obedience unto God, in that nature, was ſtill for me. Not as if I believed, his duty as man was not God's debt, by the law of creation; Yes; I believe that he owed that obedience unto God, that if he had committed but one ſin, and that of the lighteſt tincture, in all his life time, he would have been ſo far from being able to ſatisfy for my ſins, that he could not have ſatisfied for his own; *For ſuch an high prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, ſeparate from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needed not daily, as thoſe High Prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice, firſt for his own ſins, and then for the peoples*, Heb. vii. 26, 27. So that if he had not had theſe qualifications in their abſolute perfection, he could not have been our high prieſt, nor, by conſequence, have made atonement for, nor expiated any ſins whatſoever. But now, though both as man, and as God-Man or Mediator too, it behoved him to be thus faithful and ſpotleſs; yet, as being God, co-equal and co-eſſential with the Father, it was not out of duty, but merely upon our account, that he thus ſubjected his neck to the yoke of his own law; himſelf, as God, being the legiſlator or lawgiver, and ſo no more under it, than the Father himſelf.

And hereupon it is, that I verily believe, that whatſoever Chriſt either did or ſuffered in the fleſh, was meritorious; not that his life was righteous towards God, only that his death might be meritorious for us (which I believe otherwiſe it could not have been) but that his life was equally meritorious, as righteous. So that, I believe my perſon is as really accepted, as perfectly righteous, by the righteouſneſs of his life imputed to me, as my ſins are pardoned by God, for the bitterneſs of the death he ſuffered for them; his righteouſneſs being as really by faith imputed to me, as my ſins were

laid upon him: As thoſe are ſet upon his, ſo is that ſet upon my ſcore; and ſo every thing he did in his life, as well as every thing he ſuffered in his death, is mine; by the latter God looks upon me as perfectly innocent, and therefore not to be thrown down to hell; by the former he looks upon me as perfectly righteous, and, therefore, to be brought up to heaven.

And, as for his death, I believe it was not only as much, but infinitely more, ſatisfactory to Divine Juſtice, than tho' I ſhould have died to eternity. For, by that means, Juſtice is actually and perfectly ſatisfied already, which it could never have been, for my ſuffering for my ſins myſelf; for if juſtice by that means could ever be ſatisfied, if it could ever ſay, *It is enough*; it could not ſtand with the ſame juſtice, now ſatisfied, ſtill to inflict puniſhment, nor, by conſequence, could the damned juſtly ſcorch in the flames of God's wrath for ever. Neither did the death of my Saviour reach only to the condemning, but likewiſe to the commanding power of ſin; it did not only pluck out its ſting, but likewiſe deprive it of its ſtrength; ſo that he did not only merit by his death, that I ſhould never die for ſin, but likewiſe, that I ſhould die to it. Neither did he only merit by his life, that I ſhould be accounted righteous in him before God; but likewiſe that I ſhould be made righteous in myſelf by God. Yea, I believe that Chriſt by his death hath ſo fully diſcharged the debt I owe to God, that now, for the remiſſion of my ſins, and the accepting of my perſon (if I perform the condition he requires in his covenant) I may not only appeal to the throne of grace, but likewiſe to the judgment-ſeat of God; I may not only cry *mercy, mercy, O gracious Father*, but, *juſtice, juſtice, my righteous God*; I may not only ſay, Lord, be gracious and merciful, but be juſt and faithful, to acquit me from that debt, and cancel that bond which my ſurety hath paid for me, and which thou haſt promiſed to accept of; being *not only gracious and merciful, but juſt and faithful, to forgive me my ſins, and to cleanſe me from all unrighteouſneſs*, 1 John i. 9.

## ARTICLE VII.

*I believe that* CHRIST *roſe from the Grave, that I might riſe from Sin, and that He is aſcended into Heaven that I may come unto him.*

AS Chriſt came from heaven to earth, ſo, I believe He went from earth to heaven, and all for the accompliſhment of my ſalvation; that after he had lived a moſt holy life, he died a moſt cruel death; that he was apprehended, arraigned, accuſed, and condemned, by ſuch as could not pronounce the ſentence againſt him, did not himſelf, at the ſame time, vouchſafe them breath to do it; and that he that came into the world to take away the ſins of it, to bring ſinners to the joys of life, was himſelf by thoſe very ſinners brought into the pangs of death. But yet, as it was not in the power of death long to detain the Lord of life; ſo, tho' the worms had power to ſend him to the grave, yet I believe they had not power or time to feed upon him there; for *he roſe again from the dead the third day:* He lay three days, that I might believe he was not alive, but dead; he roſe the third day, that I might believe he is not dead, but lives; he deſcended down to hell, that he might make full ſatisfaction to God's juſtice for my ſins; but he is now aſcended up into heaven, that he might make interceſſion to God's mercy for my ſoul: Thither I believe he is gone, and there I believe he is, not as a private perſon, but as the Head and Saviour of his Church. And under this capacity, as I believe that Chriſt is there for me, ſo I am there in him: *For where the head is, there muſt the members be alſo*; that is, I am as really there in him, my repreſentative now, as I ſhall be in my own proper perſon hereafter; and he is as really preparing my manſion for me there, as I am preparing myſelf for that manſion here. Nay, I believe, that he is not only preparing a manſion for me in heaven, but that himſelf is likewiſe preparing me for this manſion upon earth, continually ſending down and iſſuing forth from himſelf freſh ſupplies and influences of his grace and ſpirit; and all to qualify me for his ſervice, and 'make me meet to be partaker of his inheri-'tance with the ſaints in light.'

Which inheritance, I believe, he doth ſo much deſire his Father to beſtow upon me, as he claims it for me; himſelf having purchaſed it with the price of his own blood. And as

he hath purchaſed the inheritance itſelf, ſo likewiſe the way unto it for me; and, therefore, ſues out for the pardon of thoſe ſins, and ſubduing thoſe corruptions which would make me unworthy of it; and for the conveyance of thoſe graces to me, whereby I may walk directly to it; not only ſaying to his Father, concerning me, as Paul ſaid to Philemon concerning *Oneſimus*, *If this thy ſervant oweth thee any thing, ſet it upon my account; I will repay it.* But what is this thy ſervant oweth thee, ſee, it is ſet upon my ſcore already, and I have paid it; what puniſhments he is indebted to thee, for all the offences he hath committed againſt thee, behold I have borne them already; ſee how I have been *wounded for his tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for his iniquities; the chaſtiſement of his peace was upon me; with my ſtripes therefore let him be healed*, Iſa. liii. 5. And thus, as he once ſhed his blood for me amongſt men, he now pleads it for me before God; and that not only for the waſhing out the guilt of my tranſgreſſions, but likewiſe for the waſhing away the filth of my corruptions; himſelf having purchaſed the donation of the ſpirit from the Father, he there claims the communication of it unto me.

And that he hath thus undertaken to plead my cauſe for me, I have it under his own hand and ſeal; himſelf by his Spirit aſſuring me, that if *I ſin, I have an advocate with the Father, even Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*, 1 John ii. 1. So that I believe, he is not ſo much my Solicitor at the mercy ſeat, as my advocate at the judgment-ſeat of God, there pleading my right and title to the crown of glory, and to every ſtep of the way, that I muſt go through the kingdom of grace unto it. In a word, I believe, that Chriſt, upon promiſe and engagement to pay ſuch a price for it in time, did purchaſe this inheritance for me from eternity; whereupon I was even then immediately choſen and elected into it; and had, by this means, a place in heaven before I had any being upon earth: And when the time appointed, by covenant, was come, I believe Chriſt, according to his promiſe, paid the purchaſe money, even laid down his life for me; and then forthwith went up and took poſſeſſion of this my kingdom, not for himſelf, but for me as my proxy and repreſentative: So that whilſt I am in my infancy, under age, I am in poſſeſſion, tho' I have not as yet the enjoyment of this my inheritance; but that is reſerved for me till I come at age. And howſoever, though I do not enjoy the whole as yet, my Father allows me as much of it as he ſees convenient, ſo much grace and

ſo much comfort as he thinks beſt; which are as a pledge of what he has laid up for me in his kingdom which is above.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*I believe that my Perſon is only juſtified by the Merit of* CHRIST *imputed to me; and that my Nature is only ſanctified by the Spirit of* CHRIST *implanted in me.*

AND thus I do not only believe Chriſt to be my Saviour, but I believe only Chriſt to be my Saviour. It was he alone that *trod the wine-preſs of his Father's wrath* filled with the ſour and bitter grapes of my ſins. It was he that carried on the great work of my ſalvation, being himſelf both the *author and the finiſher* of it. I ſay it was he, and he alone; for what perſon or perſons in the world could do it, beſides himſelf? the angels could not if they would, the devils would not if they could; and as for my fellow-creatures, I may as well ſatisfy for their ſins, as they for mine; and how little able even the beſt of us are to do either, *i. e.* to atone either for our own tranſgreſſions, or thoſe of others, every man's experience will ſufficiently inform him. For, how ſhould we, poor worms of the earth, ever hope, by our ſlime and mortar (if I may ſo ſpeak) of our own natural abilities, to raiſe up a tower, *whoſe top may reach to heaven?* Can we expect by the ſtrength of our own hands to take heaven by violence? or by the price of our own works to purchaſe eternal glory? It is a matter of admiration to me, how any one, that pretends to the uſe of his reaſon, can imagine, that he ſhould be accepted before God for what comes from himſelf? For, how is it poſſible that I ſhould be juſtified by good works, when I can do no good works at all before I be firſt juſtified? My works cannot be accepted as good, until my perſon be ſo; nor can my perſon be accepted by God, till firſt ingrafted into Chriſt: before which ingrafting into the true vine, it is impoſſible I ſhould bring forth good fruit; for the *plowing of the wicked is ſin, ſays Solomon*, Prov. xxi. 4. yea, *the ſacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord*, ch. xv. 8. And if, both the civil and ſpiritual actions of the wicked be ſin, which, of all their actions, ſhall have the honour to juſtify them before God? I know not how it is with others, but for my own part, I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed in all my life time, with that reverence, or

heard with that attention, or received the ſacrament with that faith, or did any other work whatſoever, with that pure heart and ſingle eye, as I ought to have done. Inſomuch that I look upon all my *Righteouſneſs as filthy rags*; and it is in the robes only of the righteouſneſs of the Son of God that I dare appear before the majeſty of heaven. Nay, ſuppoſe I could, at length, attain to that perfection, as to do good works, exactly conformable to the will of God, yet they muſt have better eyes than I, that can ſee how my obedience in one kind, can ſatisfy for my diſobedience in another; or how that which God commands from me, ſhould merit any thing from him.

No, I believe there is no perſon can merit any thing from God, but he that can do more than is required of him; which it is impoſſible any creature ſhould do. For, in that it is a creature, it continually depends upon God, and, therefore, is bound to do every thing it can, by any means, poſſible to do for him; eſpecially, conſidering, that the creature's dependence upon God is ſuch, that it is beholden to him even for every action that iſſues from it; without whom, as it is impoſſible any thing ſhould be, ſo likewiſe that any thing ſhould act, eſpecially, what is good. So that to ſay, a man of himſelf can merit any thing from God, is as much as to ſay, that he can merit by that which of himſelf he doth not do; or that one perſon can merit by that which another performs; which is a plain contradiction. For in that it merits, it is neceſſarily implied, that itſelf acts that by which it is ſaid to merit, but in that it doth not depend upon itſelf, but on another in what it acts, it is as neceſſarily implied, that itſelf doth not do that by which it is ſaid to merit.

Upon this account, I ſhall never be induced to believe, that any creature, by any thing it doth, or can do, can merit or deſerve any thing at the hand of God, till it can be proved, that a creature can merit by that which God doth; or that God can be bound to beſtow any thing upon us, for that which himſelf alone is pleaſed to work in us, and by us; which, in plain terms, would be as much as to ſay, that becauſe God hath been pleaſed to do one good turn for us, he is therefore bound to do more; and, becauſe God hath enabled us to do our duty, he ſhould therefore be bound to give us glory.

It is not, therefore, in the power of any perſon in the world to merit any thing from God, but ſuch a one who is abſolutely co-eſſential with him, and ſo depends not upon

him either for his exiſtence or actions. And, as there is no perſon can merit any thing from God, unleſs he be eſſentially the ſame with him, ſo likewiſe, unleſs he be perſonally diſtinct from him: Foraſmuch as, though a perſon may be ſaid to merit for himſelf, yet he cannot be ſaid, without a groſs ſoleciſm, to merit any thing from himſelf. So that he that is not as perfectly another perſon from God, as really as the ſame in nature with him, can never be ſaid to merit any thing at his hands.

But farther, God the Father could not properly be ſaid to do it in his own perſon, becauſe, being (according to our conception) the party offended, ſhould he have undertaken this work for me, he, in his own perſon, muſt have undertaken to make ſatisfaction to his own perſon, for the offences committed againſt himſelf; which if he ſhould have done, his mercy might have been much exalted, but his juſtice could not have been ſatisfied by it. For juſtice requires, either that the party offended ſhould be puniſhed for theſe offences, or, at leaſt, ſome fit perſon in his ſtead, which the Father himſelf cannot be ſaid to be, in that he was the party offended, to whom the ſatisfaction was to be made: and it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the ſame perſon ſhould be capable of making ſatisfaction, both by and to himſelf, at the ſame time.

It remains, therefore, that there were only two perſons in the Holy Trinity, who could poſſibly be inveſted with this capacity; the Son and the Spirit: As to the latter, tho' he be indeed the ſame in nature with the Father, and a diſtinct perſon from him, and ſo far in a capacity to make ſatisfaction to him; yet not being capable both of aſſuming the human nature into the divine, and alſo uniting and applying the divine nature to the human, (as I have ſhewed before in the fifth article) he was not in a capacity of making ſatisfaction for man; none being fit to take that office upon him, but he that, of himſelf, was perfectly God, and likewiſe capable of becoming perfectly man, by uniting both natures in the ſame perſon; which the Holy Ghoſt could not do, becauſe he was the perſon by whom, and therefore could not be the perſon alſo in whom, this union of the two natures was to be perfected. And yet it was by this means, and this method only, that any perſon could have been compleatly capacitated to have borne the puniſhment of our ſins: He that was only man could not do it, becauſe the ſin was committed againſt God; and he that was only God could not do it, becauſe the ſin was committed by man.

From all which, as I may fairly infer, ſo, I hope, I may ſafely fix my faith in this article, *viz.* That there was only one perſon in the whole world that could do this great work for me, of juſtifying my perſon before God, and ſo glorifying my ſoul with him; and that was the Son of God, the ſecond perſon in the glorious Trinity, begotten of the ſubſtance of the Father from all eternity; whom I apprehend and believe to have brought about the great work of my juſtification before God, after this or the like manner.

He being, in and of himſelf, perfectly co-equal, co eſſential, and co-eternal with the Father, was in no ſort bound to do more than the Father himſelf did; and ſo whatſoever he ſhould do, which the Father did not, might juſtly be accounted as a work of ſupererogation; which, without any violation of Divine Juſtice, might be ſet upon the account of ſome other perſons, even of ſuch whom he pleaſed to do it for. And hereupon, out of mercy and compaſſion to fallen man, he covenants with his Father, that if it pleaſed his majeſty to accept it, he would take upon him the ſuffering of thoſe puniſhments which were due from him to man, and the performance of thoſe duties which were due from man to him: ſo that whatſoever he ſhould thus humble himſelf to do or ſuffer, ſhould wholly be upon the account of man, himſelf not being any ways bound to do or ſuffer more in time, than he had from eternity.

This motion, the Father, out of the riches of his grace and mercy, was pleaſed to conſent unto: And hereupon, the Son aſſuming our nature into his Deity, becomes ſubject and obedient both to the moral and ceremonial laws of his Father; and, at laſt, to death itſelf, *even the death of the croſs.* In the one, he paid an active, in the other a paſſive obedience; and ſo did not only fulfil the will of his Father, in obeying what he had commanded, but ſatisfied his juſtice in ſuffering the puniſhment due to us for the tranſgreſſing of it. His active obedience, as it was infinitely pure and perfect, did, without doubt, infinitely tranſcend all the obedience of the ſons of men, even of Adam too, in his primitive ſtate. For, the obedience of Adam, make the beſt of it, was but the obedience of a finite creature; whereas the obedience of Chriſt was the obedience of one that was infinite God, as well as man. By which means, the laws of God had higher obedience performed to them, than themſelves in their primitive inſtitution required; for being made only to finite creatures, they could command no more than the obedience of finite

creatures; whereas the obedience of Chriſt was the obedience of one who was the infinite Creator, as well as a finite creature.

Now, this obedience being more than Chriſt was bouud to, and only performed upon the account of thoſe whoſe nature he had aſſumed; as we, by faith, lay hold upon it, ſo God, through grace, imputes it to us, as if it had been performed by us in our own perſons. And hence it is, that as, in one place, Chriſt is ſaid to be *made ſin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. ſo in another place, he is ſaid to be *made our righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 30. And in the fore cited place, 2 Cor. v. 21. as he is ſaid to be made *ſin for us*, ſo we are ſaid to be *made righteouſneſs* in him: But what righteouſneſs? Our own? No, *The righteouſneſs of God*, radically his, but imputatively ours: And this is the only way, whereby we are ſaid to be *made the righteouſneſs of God*, even by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt's being made ours, by which we are accounted and reputed as righteous before God.

Theſe things conſidered, I very much wonder, how any man can preſume to exclude the active obedience of Chriſt from our juſtification before God, as if what Chriſt did in the fleſh, was only of duty, not at all of merit; or, as if it was for himſelf, and not for us. Eſpecially, when I conſider, that ſuffering the penalty is not what the law primarily requireth; for the law of God requires perfect obedience, the penalty being only threatened to (not properly required of) the breakers of it. For, let a man ſuffer the penalty of the law in never ſo high a manner, he is not therefore accounted obedient to it; his puniſhment doth not ſpeak his innocence, but rather his tranſgreſſion of the law.

Hence it is, that I cannot look upon Chriſt, as having made full ſatisfaction to God's juſtice for me, unleſs he had performed the obedience I owe to God's laws, as well as borne the puniſhment that is due to my ſins: for tho' he ſhould have borne my ſins, I cannot ſee how that could denominate me righteous or obedient to the law, ſo as to entitle me to eternal life, according to the tenor of the old law, *Do this and live*, Lev. xviii. 5. Which old covenant is not diſannulled or abrogated by the covenant of grace, but rather eſtabliſhed, Rom. iii. 31. eſpecially as to the obedience it requires from us, in order to the life it promiſeth; otherwiſe, the laws of God would be mutable, and ſo come ſhort of the laws of the very Medes and Perſians, which alter not. Obedience, therefore, is as ſtrictly required under the New, as it

was under the Old Teſtament, but with this difference: there obedience in our own perſons was required as abſolutely neceſſary; here, obedience in our ſurety is accepted as compleatly ſufficient.

But now, if we have no ſuch obedience in our ſurety, as we cannot have, if he did not live, as well as die, for us; let any one tell me, what title he hath, or can have, to eternal life? I ſuppoſe he will tell me, he hath none in himſelf, becauſe he hath not performed perfect obedience to the law. And I tell him, he hath none in Chriſt, unleſs Chriſt performed that obedience for him, which none can ſay he did, that doth not believe his active, as well as paſſive obedience, to be wholly upon our account.

And now I ſpeak of Chriſt's being our ſurety, as the Apoſtle calls him, *Heb.* vii. 22. methinks this gives much light to the truth in hand: For, what is a ſurety, but one that undertakes to pay whatſoever he, whoſe ſurety he is, is bound to pay, in caſe the debtor proves non-ſolvent, or unable to pay it himſelf? And thus is Chriſt, under the notion of a ſurety, bound to pay whatever we owe to God, becauſe we ourſelves are not able to pay it in our own perſons.

Now, there are two things that we owe to God, which this our ſurety is bound to pay for us, *viz.* Firſt, and principally, obedience to his laws, as he is our Creator and Governor; and, ſecondly, by conſequence, the puniſhment that is annexed to the breach of theſe laws, of which we are guilty. Now, tho' Chriſt ſhould pay the latter part of our debt for us, by bearing the puniſhment that is due unto us; yet, if he did not pay the former and principal part of it too, *i. e.* perform the obedience which we owe to God, he would not fully have performed the office of ſuretyſhip, which he undertook for us; and ſo would be but a Half-Mediator, or Half-Saviour, which are ſuch words as I dare ſcarce pronounce, for fear of blaſphemy.

So that, though it is the death of Chriſt by which I believe my ſins are pardoned; yet it is the life of Chriſt, by which I believe my perſon is accepted. His paſſion God accounts as ſuffered by me, and therefore I ſhall not die for ſin: His obedience God accounts as performed by me, and therefore I ſhall live with him. Not as if I believed, that Chriſt ſo performed obedience for me, that I ſhould be diſcharged from my duty to him; but only, that I ſhould not be condemned by God, in not diſcharging my duty to him in ſo ſtrict a manner, as is required. I believe that the active obedience of

Chriſt will ſtand me in no ſtead, unleſs I endeavour after ſincere obedience in my own perſon; his active, as well as his paſſive obedience, being imputed unto none, but only to ſuch as apply it to themſelves by faith; which faith in Chriſt will certainly put ſuch as are poſſeſſed of it upon obedience unto God. This, therefore, is the righteouſneſs, and the manner of that juſtification, whereby I hope to ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of God; even by God's imputing my ſins to Chriſt, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs to me; looking upon me as one not to be puniſhed for my ſins, becauſe Chriſt hath ſuffered, but to be received into the joys of glory, becauſe Chriſt hath performed obedience for me, and does, by faith, through grace, impute it to me.

And thus, it is into the merit of Chriſt, that I reſolve the whole work of my ſalvation; and this, not only, as to that which is wrought without me, for the juſtification of my perſon, but likewiſe as to what is wrought within me for the ſanctification of my nature. As I cannot have a ſin pardoned without Chriſt, ſo neither can I have a ſin ſubdued without him; neither the fire of God's wrath can be quenched, nor yet the filth of my ſins waſhed away, but by the blood of Chriſt.

So that I wonder as much at the doctrine that ſome men have advanced concerning free will, as I do at that which others have broached in favour of good works; and it is a myſtery to me, how any that ever had experience of God's method in working out ſin, and planting grace in our hearts, ſhould think they can do it by themſelves, or any thing in order to it. Not that I do, in the leaſt, queſtion, but that every man may be ſaved that will; (for this, I believe, is a real truth) but I do not believe, that any man of himſelf can will to be ſaved. Whereſoever God enables a ſoul effectually to will ſalvation, he will certainly give ſalvation to that ſoul; but I believe, it is as impoſſible for my ſoul to will ſalvation, of himſelf, as to enjoy ſalvation without God.

And this my faith is not grounded upon a roving fancy, but the moſt ſolid reaſons; foraſmuch as, of ourſelves, we are not able, in our underſtandings, to diſcern the evil from the good, much leſs then, are we able, in our wills, to prefer the good before the evil; the will never ſettling upon any thing, but what the judgment diſcovers to it. But now, that my natural judgment is unable to apprehend and repreſent to my will the true and only good under its proper notion, my own too ſad experience would ſufficiently perſuade

me, though I had neither ſcripture nor reaſon for it. And yet, the ſcripture alſo is ſo clear in this point, that I could not have denied it, though I ſhould never have had any experience of it; the moſt High expreſsly telling me, that the *natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *Neither can he know them, i. e.* There is an abſolute impoſſibility in it, that any one remaining in his natural principles, without the aſſiſtance of God, ſhould apprehend or conceive the excellency of ſpiritual objects. So that a man may as ſoon read the letter of the ſcripture without eyes, as underſtand the myſteries of the goſpel without grace. And this is not at all to be wondered at; eſpecially, if we conſider the vaſt and infinite diſproportion betwixt the object and the faculty; the object to be apprehended being nothing leſs than the beſt of beings, God: and the faculty whereby we apprehend it, nothing more than the power of a finite creature polluted with the worſt of evils, ſin.

So that I believe it a thouſand times eaſier for a worm, a fly, or any other deſpicable inſect whatſoever, to underſtand the affairs of men, than for the beſt of men in a natural ſtate to apprehend the things of God. No; there is none can know God, nor, by conſequence, any thing that is really good, but only ſo far as they are partakers of the divine nature: We muſt, in ſome meaſure, be like to God, before we can have any true conceptions of him, or be really delighted with him: We muſt have a ſpiritual ſight, before we can behold ſpiritual things; which every natural man being deſtitute of, he can ſee no comelineſs in Chriſt, why he ſhould be deſired; nor any amiableneſs in religion, why it ſhould be embraced.

And hence it is, that I believe, the firſt work that God puts forth upon the ſoul in order to its converſion, is, to raiſe up a ſpiritual light within it, to clear up its apprehenſions about ſpiritual matters, ſo as to enable the ſoul to look upon God as the chiefeſt good, and the enjoyment of him as the greateſt bliſs; whereby the ſoul may clearly diſcern between good and evil, and evidently perceive, that nothing is good, but ſo far as it is like to God; and nothing evil, but ſo far as it reſembles ſin.

But this is not all the work that God hath to do upon a ſinful ſoul, to bring it to himſelf; for though I muſt confeſs that in natural things, the will always follows the ultimate dictates of the underſtanding, ſo as to chuſe and embrace what the

underſtanding repreſents to it, under the comely dreſs of good and amiable, and to refuſe and abhor whatever, under the ſame repreſentation, appears to be evil and dangerous; I ſay, though I muſt confeſs, it is ſo in natural, yet I believe, it is not ſo in ſpiritual matters. For, tho' the underſtanding may have never ſuch clear apprehenſions of ſpiritual good, yet the will is not at all affected with it, without the joint operations of the grace of God upon us; all of us too ſadly experiencing what St. Paul long ago bewailed in himſelf, that *what we do, we allow not*, Rom. vii. 15. that though our judgments condemn what we do, yet we cannot chuſe but do it; though our underſtandings clearly diſcover to us the excellence of grace and glory, yet our wills overpowered with their own corruptions, are ſtrangely hurried into ſin and miſery, I muſt confeſs, it is a truth which I ſhould ſcarcely have ever believed, if I had not ſuch daily experience of it: But alas! there is ſcarce an hour in the day, but I may go about lamenting, with *Medea* in *Seneca*, *Video meliora, proboque; deteriora ſequor*; though I ſee what is good, yea, and judge it to be the better, yet, I very often chuſe the worſe.

And the reaſon of it is, becauſe, as by our fall from God, the whole ſoul was deſperately corrupted; ſo it is not the rectifying of one faculty, which can make the whole ſtraight; but as the whole was changed from holineſs to ſin, ſo muſt the whole be changed again from ſin to holineſs, before it can be inſerted into a ſtate of grace, or ſo much as an act of grace to be exerted by it.

Now, therefore, the underſtanding and will being two diſtinct faculties, or, at leaſt, two diſtinct acts in the ſoul, it is impoſſible for the underſtanding to be ſo enlightened, as to prefer the good before the evil, and yet for the will to remain ſo corrupt, as to chuſe the evil before the good. And hence it is, that where God intends to work over a ſoul to himſelf, he doth not only paſs an enlightening act upon the underſtanding and its apprehenſions, but likewiſe a ſanctifying act upon the will and its affections, that when the ſoul perceives the glory of God, and the beauty of holineſs, it may preſently cloſe with, and entertain it with the choiceſt of its affections. And without God's thus drawing it, the underſtanding could never allure the ſoul to good.

And therefore it is, that for all the clear diſcoveries which the underſtanding may make to itſelf concerning the glories of the inviſible world, yet God aſſures us, it is himſelf alone that affects the ſoul with them, by inclining its will to them;

for it is God, *which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. So that, though God offer heaven to all that will accept of it, in the holy ſcriptures; yet none can accept of it, but ſuch whom himſelf ſtirs up by his Holy Spirit to endeavour after it. And thus we find it was in Iſrael's return from Babylon to Jeruſalem, though king Cyrus made a proclamation, that whoſoever would might go up to worſhip at the Holy City, *Ezra* i. 3. yet there was none that accepted of the offer, *but thoſe whoſe ſpirit God had raiſed to go up*, verſe 5. So here, tho' God doth, as it were, proclaim to all the world, that whoſoever will come to Chriſt ſhall certainly be ſaved, yet it doth not follow, that all ſhall receive ſalvation from him, becauſe it is certain all will not come; or rather, none can will to come unleſs God enable him.

I am ſure, to ſay none ſhall be ſaved, but thoſe that will of themſelves, would be ſad news for me, whoſe will is naturally ſo backward to every thing that is good. But this is my comfort, I am as certain, my ſalvation is of God, as I am certain it cannot be of myſelf. It is Chriſt who vouchſafed to die for me, who hath likewiſe promiſed to live within me; It is he that will work all my works, both for me and in me too. In a word, it is to him I am beholden, not only for my ſpiritual bleſſings and enjoyments, but even for my temporal ones too, which, in and thro' his name, I daily put up my petitions for. So that I have not ſo much as a morſel of bread, in mercy, from God, but only upon the account of Chriſt; not a drop of drink, but what flows to me in his blood. It is he that is the very bleſſing of all my bleſſings, without whom my very mercies would prove but curſes, and my proſperity would but work my ruin.

*Whither, therefore, ſhould I go, my dear and bleſſed Saviour, but unto thee?* Thou haſt the words of eternal life. *And how ſhall I come, but by thee? Thou haſt the treaſures of all grace. O thou, that haſt wrought out my ſalvation for me, be pleaſed likewiſe to work this ſalvation in me; give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a meaſure of thy grace, as to believe in thee here upon earth: and then give me ſuch degrees of glory, as fully to enjoy thee for ever in heaven.*

## ARTICLE IX.

*I believe God entered into a double Covenant with Man, the Covenant of Works made with the firſt, and the Covenant of Grace made in the ſecond* Adam.

THAT the moſt High God ſhould take a piece of earth, work it up into the frame and faſhion of a man, and *breathe into his noſtrils the breath of life*, and then ſhould enter into a covenant with it, and ſhould ſay, *Do this and live*, when man was bound to do it, whether he could live by it or no, was, without doubt, a great and amazing act of love and condeſcenſion; but that, when this covenant was unhappily broken by the firſt, God ſhould inſtantly vouchſafe to renew it in the ſecond Adam; and that too upon better terms, and more eaſy conditions than the former, was yet a more ſurprizing mercy: For the ſame day that Adam eat the forbidden fruit did God make him this promiſe, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, *Gen.* iii. 15. And this promiſe he afterwards explained and confirmed by the mouth of his prophet Jeremy, ſaying, *This is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days; I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people*, Jer. xxxi. 33. And again, by St. Paul, under the New Teſtament, almoſt in the ſelf-ſame words, *Heb.* viii. 10.

A covenant ſo gracious and condeſcending, that it ſeems to be made up of nothing elſe but promiſes. The firſt was, properly ſpeaking, a covenant of works, requiring, on man's part, a perfect and unſinning obedience, without any extraordinary grace or aſſiſtance from God to enable him to perform it; but here, in the ſecond, God undertakes both for himſelf and for man too, having digeſted the conditions to be performed by us, into promiſes, to be fulfilled by himſelf, *viz.* that he will not only pardon our ſins, if we do repent, but that he will give us repentance, that ſo we may deſerve his pardon; that he will not only give us life, if we come to Chriſt, but even draw us to Chriſt, that ſo he may give us life; and ſo not only make us happy, if we will be holy, but make us holy, that ſo we may be happy: For the covenant is, not that he will be our God, if we will be his people, but

he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people. But ſtill, all this is in and through Chriſt, the ſurety and mediator of this covenant, in whom all the *promiſes are yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. ſo that Chriſt may be looked upon, not only as a ſurety, but as a party in this covenant of grace, being not only bound to God, but likewiſe covenanting with him for us. As God-Man, he is a ſurety for us, but as man he muſt needs be a party with us, even our head in the covenant of grace, as Adam was in the covenant of works.

What therefore, though I can do nothing in this covenant of myſelf? yet this is my comfort, that he hath undertaken for me, who can do all things. And therefore it is called a covenant of grace, and not of works, becauſe in it there is no work required from me, but what, by grace, I ſhall be enabled to perform.

And as for the tenor in which this covenant runs, or the *Habendum* and grant which each party covenants for, it is expreſs in theſe words, *I will be your* GOD, *and you ſhall be my people*; GOD covenants with us, that we ſhall be his people, we covenant with God, that he ſhall be our God. And what can God ſtipulate more to us, or we ſtipulate more to him than this? What doth not God promiſe to us, when he promiſes to be our God? and what doth he not require from us, when he requires us to be his people.

*Firſt*, He doth not ſay, I will be your hope, your help, your light, your life, your ſun, your ſhield, and your exceeding great reward; but I will be your *GOD*, which is ten thouſand times more than poſſibly can be couched under any other expreſſions whatſoever, as containing under it whatſoever God is, whatſoever God hath, and whatſoever God can do. All his eſſential attributes are ſtill engaged for us; we may lay claim to them, and take hold on them: So that what the prophet ſaith of his righteouſneſs and ſtrength, *ſurely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xiv. 24. I may extend to all his other attributes, and ſay, ſurely in the Lord have I mercy to pardon me, wiſdom to inſtruct me, power to protect me, truth to direct me, grace to crown my heart on earth, and glory to crown my head in heaven: And, if what he is, then much more what he hath, is here made over by covenant to me. *He that ſpared not his own ſon*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *but delivered him up for us all*; *how ſhall he not but with him likewiſe freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. But what hath God to give me? Why, all that he hath is briefly ſummed up in this ſhort inventory; whatſoever is in

heaven above, or the earth beneath, is his; and that this inventory is true, I have ſeveral witneſſes to prove it, *Melchizedeck*, Gen. xiv. 19. and *Moſes*, Deut. x. 14. and *David*, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Indeed, reaſon itſelf will conclude this, that he that is the Creator and preſerver, muſt, of neceſſity, be the owner and poſſeſſor of all things; ſo that let me imagine what poſſibly I can in all the world, I may with the pen of reaſon write under it, *This is GOD's*; and if I take but the pen of faith with it, I may write, *This is mine in Jeſus Chriſt.*

As for example; hath he a Son? He hath died for me. Hath he a Spirit? It ſhall live within me. Is earth his? It ſhall be my proviſion. Is heaven his? It ſhall be my portion. Hath he angels? They ſhall guard me. Hath he comforts? They ſhall ſupport me. Hath he grace? That ſhall make me holy. Hath he glory? That ſhall make me happy, *For the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from thoſe that walk uprightly*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11.

And as he is nothing but what he is unto us, ſo he doth nothing but what he doth for us. So that whatſoever God doth by his ordinary providence, or (if our neceſſity requires) whatſoever he can do by his extraordinary power, I may be ſure, he doth and will do for me. Now he hath given himſelf to me, and taken me unto himſelf, what will he not do for me that he can? And what can he not do for me that he will? Do I want food? God can drop down manna from the clouds, *Exod* xvi. 4. or bid the quails come down and feed me with their own fleſh, as they did the Iſraelites, ver. 13. or he can ſend the ravens to bring me bread and fleſh, as they did the prophet Elijah, 1 *Kings* xvii. 6 Am I thirſty? God can broach the rocks, and diſſolve the flints into floods of water, as he did for Iſrael, *Deut.* vii. 25. Am I caſt into a fiery furnace? he can ſuſpend the fury of the raging flames, as he did for *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, Dan iii. 23. Am I thrown among the devouring lions? he can ſtop their mouths, and make them as harmleſs as lambs, as he did for Daniel, *Dan.* vi. 22. Am I ready to be ſwallowed up by the mercileſs waves of the tempeſtuous ocean? God can command a fiſh to come and ſhip me ſafe to land, and that in its own belly, as he did for his prophet Jonah, *Jonah* ii. 10. Am I in Priſon? God can ſpeak the word, as he did for St. Peter, and the chains ſhall immediately fall off, and the doors fly open, and I ſhall be ſet at liberty, as he was, *Acts* xii. 7, 8, 9, 10. And thus I can have no wants, but God can

ſupply them, no doubts, but God can reſolve them, no fears, but God can diſpel them, no dangers, but God can prevent them. And it is as certain, that he will, as that he can, do theſe things for me, himſelf having, by covenant, engaged and given himſelf unto me.

And as, in God's giving himſelf, he hath given whatſoever he is, and whatſoever he hath unto me, and will do whatſoever he can do for me; ſo in my giving myſelf to him, whatſoever I have I am to give to him, and whatſoever I do I am to do for him. But now, though we ſhould thus wholly give up ourſelves to God, and do whatſoever he requires of us (which none, I fear, without ſome degree of preſumption, can ſay he has done) yet there is an infinite diſproportion between the grant on God's part, and that on ours, in that he is God, and we but creatures, *the workmanſhip of his own hands*, to whom it was our duty to give ourſelves, whether he had ever given himſelf to us or no: He is ours by covenant only, not by nature; we are his both by covenant and nature too.

Hence we may infer, that it is not only our duty to do what he hath commanded us, becauſe he hath ſaid, *Do this and live*; but becauſe he hath ſaid, *Do this*; yea, though he ſhould ſay, Do this and die, it would ſtill be our duty to do it, becauſe we are his, wholly of his making, and therefore wholly at his diſpoſing; inſomuch that ſhould he put me upon the doing that which would inevitably bring ruin upon me, I am not to neglect obeying him for fear of deſtroying myſelf, his will and pleaſure being infinitely to be preferred before my life and ſalvation.

But, if it were my duty to obey his commands, though I ſhould die for it, how much more, when he hath promiſed, I ſhall live by it? nay, I ſhall not only live, if I obey him, but my obedience itſelf ſhall be my life and happineſs; for if I be obedient unto him, he is pleaſed to account himſelf as glorified by me: *for herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit*, John xv. 8. Now, what greater glory can poſſibly be deſired, than to glorify my Maker? how can I be more glorified by God than to have God glorified by me; it is the glory of God to glorify himſelf; and what a higher glory can a creature aſpire after, than that which is the infinite glory of its All-glorious Creator? it is not, therefore, my duty only, but my glory to give myſelf, and whatſoever I am, unto him, *to glorify him both in my body and in my ſpirit which are his*, 1 Cor. vi, 20. to lay out whatſoever I

have for him, *to honour him with all my ſubſtance*, Prov. iii. 9. and *whether I eat or drink, or whatſoever I do, to do all to his glory*, 1 Cor. x. 31. Not as if it was poſſible for God to receive more glory from me now, than he had in himſelf from all eternity. No: he was infinitely glorious then, and it is impoſſible for him to be more glorious now; all that we can do, is duly to acknowledge that glory which he hath in himſelf, and to manifeſt it, as we ought, before others; which, though it be no addition to his glory, yet it is the perfection of ours, which he is pleaſed to account as his.

As for the grant, therefore, in the Covenant of Grace; I believe it to be the ſame on our parts, with that in the Covenant of Works, *i. e.* That we Chriſtians are as much bound to obey the commands he lays upon us now, as the Jews under the old Covenant were. What difference there is, is wholly and ſolely on God's part; who, inſtead of expecting obedience from us, is pleaſed, in this New Covenant, to give this obedience to us. Inſtead of ſaying, *Do this and live*, he hath, in effect, ſaid, I will enable you to do this, that ſo you may live. *I will put my laws into your minds, and write them in your hearts; and I will be to you a God, and you ſhall be to me a people, Heb.* viii. 10. Not, I will, if you will; but I will, and you ſhall. Not, if you will do this, you ſhall live; but, you ſhall do this, and live. So that God doth not require leſs from us, but only hath promiſed more to us, in the New, than he did in the Old Covenant. There, we were to perform obedience to God; but it was by our own ſtrength: Here, we are to perform the ſame obedience ſtill; but it is by his ſtrength. Nay, as we have more obligations to obedience upon us now, than we had before, by reaſon of God's expreſſing more grace and favour to us than formerly he did; ſo I believe God expects more from us, under the New, than he did under the Old Covenant. In that, he expected the obedience of Men; in this, he expects the obedience of Chriſtians, ſuch as are by faith united unto Chriſt, and, in Chriſt, unto himſelf; and ſo are to do what they do, not by the ſtrength of man, as before, but by the ſtrength of the eternal God himſelf; who, as he at firſt created me for himſelf, ſo he hath now purchaſed me to himſelf, received me into Covenant with him, and promiſed to enable me with grace to perform that obedience he requires from me; and, therefore, he now expects I ſhould lay out myſelf, even whatſoever I have or I am, wholly for him and his glory.

This, therefore, being the tenor of this Covenant of grace,

it follows, that I am none of my own, but wholly God's: I am his by creation, and his by redemption, and, therefore, ought to be his by converſion. Why, therefore, ſhould I live any longer to myſelf, who am not my own, but God's? And why ſhould I grudge to give myſelf to him, who did not grudge to give himſelf for me? or rather, Why ſhould I ſteal myſelf from him, who have already given myſelf to him? But did I ſay, I have given myſelf to my God? Alas! it is but the reſtoring myſelf to him, whoſe I was ever ſince I had a being, and to whom I am ſtill infinitely more engaged, than I can thus cordially engage myſelf to him; for, as I am not my own, but his; ſo the very giving of myſelf to him, is not from myſelf, but from him. I could not have given myſelf to him, had he not firſt given himſelf to me, and even wrought my mind into this reſolution of giving myſelf to him.

But, having thus ſolemnly by Covenant given myſelf to him, how doth it behove me to improve myſelf for him; my ſoul is his, my body his, my parts his, my gifts his, my graces his, and whatſoever is mine, is his; for, without him I could not have been, and therefore could have had nothing. So that I have no more cauſe to be proud of any thing I have, or am, than a page hath to be proud of his fine cloaths, which are not his, but his maſter's; who beſtows all this finery upon him, not for his page's honour or credit, but for his own.

And thus it is with the beſt of us, in reſpect of God; he gives men parts and learning, and riches and grace, and deſires and expects that we ſhould make a due uſe of them: But to what end? Not to gain honour and eſteem to ourſelves, to make us proud and haughty; but to give him the honour due to his name, and ſo employ them as inſtruments in promoting his glory and ſervice. So that, whenſoever we do not lay out ourſelves to the utmoſt of our power for him, it is downright ſacrilege; it is robbing God of that which is more properly his, than any man in the world can call any thing he hath his own.

Having, therefore, thus wholly ſurrendered and given up myſelf to God, ſo long as it ſhall pleaſe his majeſty to entruſt me with myſelf, to lend me my being in the lower world, or to put any thing elſe into my hands, as time, health, ſtrength, parts or the like; I am reſolved, by his grace, to lay out all for his glory. All the faculties of my ſoul, as I have given them to him, ſo will I endeavour to improve them for him; they ſhall ſtill be at his moſt noble ſervice; my underſtanding ſhall be his, to know him; my will his, to chuſe him; my

affections his, to embrace him; and all the members of my body ſhall act in ſubſerviency to him.

And thus, having given myſelf to God on earth, I hope God in a ſhort time will take me to himſelf in heaven; where, as I give myſelf to him in time, he will give himſelf to me unto all eternity.

## ARTICLE X.

*I believe, that as God entered into a Covenant of Grace with us, ſo hath he ſigned this Covenant to us by a double Seal,* Baptiſm *and the* Lord's Supper.

AS the covenant of works had two ſacraments, *viz. The tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil*; the firſt ſignifying and ſealing life and happineſs to the performance, the other death and miſery to the breach, of it: So the covenant of grace was likewiſe ſealed with two typical ſacraments, Circumciſion and the paſſover. The former was annexed at God's firſt making his covenant with Abraham's perſon; the other was added, at his fulfilling the promiſes of it, to his ſeed or poſterity, which were therefore ſtyled, *the promiſed ſeed.* But theſe being only typical of the true and ſpiritual ſacraments, that were afterwards to take place upon the coming of the Meſſiah, there were then, *in the fulneſs of time*, two other ſacraments ſubſtituted in their ſtead, *viz.* baptiſm and the *ſupper of the Lord.* And theſe ſacraments were both correſpondent to the types by which they were repreſented.

As to the firſt, *viz.* Circumciſion, whether I conſider the time of conferring it, or the end of its inſtitution, I find it exactly anſwers to the ſacrament of baptiſm in both theſe reſpects. For, as the children under the law were to be circumciſed in their infancy, at *eight days old*; ſo are the children under the goſpel to be baptized in their infancy too. And as the principal thing intended in the rite of circumciſion, was to initiate or admit the children of the faithful into the Jewiſh church; ſo the chief deſign of baptiſm now, is to admit the children of ſuch as profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, into the church of Chriſt. And, for this reaſon, I believe, that as, under the Old Teſtament, children had the grant of covenant privileges, and church-membership, as really as their parents had; ſo this grant was not repealed, as is intimated,

*Acts* ii. 39. but farther confirmed in the New Teſtament, in that the Apoſtle calls the children of believing parents *holy*, 1 Cor. xii. 14. Which cannot be underſtood of a real and inherent, but only of a relative and covenanted holineſs, by virtue of which, being born of believing parents, themſelves are accounted in the number of believers, and are therefore called holy children under the goſpel, in the ſame ſenſe that the people of Iſrael were called a holy people under the law, Deut. vii. 6. and xiv. 2. 21. as being all within the *covenant of grace*, which, through the faith of their parents, is thus ſealed to them in baptiſm.

Not that I think it neceſſary, that all parents ſhould be endued with what we call a Saving Faith, to entitle their children to theſe privileges (for then none but the children of ſuch who have the Spirit of Chriſt truly implanted in them, would be qualified to partake of the covenant) but even ſuch, who by an outward hiſtorical faith have taken the name of Chriſt upon them, are by that means in covenant with God, and ſo accounted holy in reſpect of their profeſſion, whatever they may be in point of practice. And if they are themſelves holy, it follows, of courſe, that their children muſt be ſo too, they being eſteemed as parts of their parents, till made diſtinct members in the body of Chriſt; or, at leaſt, till they come to the uſe of their reaſon, and the improvement of their natural abilities.

And therefore, though the ſeal be changed, yet the covenant privileges, wherewith the parties ſtipulating unto God were before inveſted, are no whit altered or diminiſhed; believers children being as really confederates with their parents, in the *covenant of grace* now, as they were before under the Jewiſh adminiſtration of it. And this ſeems to be altogether neceſſary; for otherwiſe, infants ſhould be inveſted with privileges under the type, and be deprived of, or excluded from them, under the more perfect accompliſhment of the ſame covenant in the thing typified; and ſo the diſpenſations of God's grace would be more ſtreight and narrow ſince, than they were before the coming of our Saviour, which I look upon to be no leſs than blaſphemy to aſſert.

And, upon this ground, I believe, it is as really the duty of Chriſtians to baptize their children now, as ever it was the duty of the Iſraelites to circumciſe theirs; and therefore St. Peter's queſtion, *Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we?* Acts x. 47. may very properly be applied to

this caſe. Can any man forbid water, that children ſhould not be baptized, who are in covenant with the moſt high God as well as we? For what is it, I pray, that the right to baptiſm doth depend upon? Surely, not upon performing the conditions of the covenant; for then none ſhall be baptized, but ſuch as are true believers in themſelves, and known to be ſo by us, and, by conſequence, none at all; it being only God's prerogative to ſearch their hearts, and to know the truth of that grace, which himſelf hath been pleaſed to beſtow upon them. But children's right to baptiſm is grounded upon the outward profeſſion of their believing parents; ſo that as a king may be crowned in his cradle, not becauſe he is able to weild the ſceptre, or manage the affairs of his kingdom, but becauſe he is heir to his father: So here, children are not therefore baptized becauſe they are able to perform the conditions of the covenant, which is ſealed to them, but becauſe they are children to believing parents. And this ſeems yet to be farther evident, from the very nature of ſeals, which are not adminiſtered or annexed to any covenant, becauſe the conditions are already performed, but rather that they may be performed; and ſo children are not baptized becauſe they are already true Chriſtians, but that they may be ſo hereafter.

As for a command for infant-baptiſm, I believe, that the ſame law that enjoined circumciſion to the Jewiſh, enjoins baptiſm likewiſe to Chriſtian children, there being the ſame reaſon for both. The reaſon why the Jewiſh children were to be circumciſed, was becauſe they were Jewiſh children, born of ſuch as profeſſed the true worſhip of God, and were in covenant with him; and there is the ſame reaſon, why Chriſtian children are to be baptized, even becauſe they are Chriſtian children, born of ſuch as profeſs the true worſhip of the ſame God, and are confederates in the ſame covenant with the Jews themſelves. And, as there is the ſame reaſon, ſo likewiſe the ſame end for both, *viz.* That the children might be actually admitted into the ſame covenant with their parents, and have it viſibly confirmed to them by this initiating ſeal put upon them: So that circumciſion and baptiſm are not two diſtinct ſeals, but the ſame ſeal diverſly applied; the one being but as a type of the other, and ſo to give place to it, whenſoever, by the inſtitution of Chriſt, it ſhould be brought into the Church of God. And therefore, the command for initiating children into the Church by baptiſm, remains ſtill in force, though circumciſion, which was the type

and ſhadow of it, be done away. And for this reaſon, I believe, that was there never a command in the New Teſtament for infant baptiſm, yet, ſeeing there is one for circumciſion in the Old, and for baptiſm, as coming into the place of it, in the New, I ſhould look upon baptiſm as neceſſarily to be applied to infants now, as circumciſion was then.

But why ſhould it be ſuppoſed, that there is no command in the New Teſtament for infant-baptiſm? There are ſeveral texts that ſeem to imply its being practiſed in the firſt preaching of the goſpel, as particularly in the caſe of Lydia and the *keeper of the priſon*, Acts xvi. 15. 33. who had their whole families baptized, and we no where find, that children were excepted. On the contrary, St. Peter exhorting the converted Jews to be baptized, makes uſe of this argument to bring them to it, *For the promiſe*, ſays he, *is unto you and your children*, Acts ii. 38, 39. which may as reaſonably be underſtood of their infants, as of their adult poſterity. But, beſides, it was the expreſs command of CHRIST to his diſciples, that they ſhould *go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. xxviii. 19. The meaning of which words I take to be this; go ye, and preach the goſpel among all nations, and endeavour thereby to bring them over to the embracing of it; that leaving all Jewiſh ceremonies and Heatheniſh idolatries, they may profeſs my name, and become my diſciples, receive the truth, and follow me; which if they do, I charge you to *baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt:* For the word *Matheteuſate* doth not ſignify to teach, but *to make diſciples*, denoting the ſame here, that *mathetas poiein* doth upon the like occaſion, *John* iv. 1.

And this is the ſenſe that all the antient tranſlations agree in: nor, indeed, will the text itſelf bear any other; eſpecially, not that of teaching; for though the Apoſtles ſhould have taught all nations, yet they were not preſently to baptize them unleſs they became diſciples, and profeſſors of the doctrine that they were taught. A man may be taught the doctrine of the goſpel, and yet not believe it; and even tho' he ſhould believe, yet unleſs he openly profeſs his faith in it, he ought not preſently to be baptized. For, without this outward profeſſion, the very profeſſing of CHRIST cannot entitle a man to this privilege before men, though it doth before God; becauſe we cannot know how any one ſtands affected towards Chriſt, but only by his outward profeſſion of him. It is the inward profeſſion of Chriſt's perſon that en-

titles us to the inward ſpiritual grace: But it is the outward profeſſion of his name only, that entitles us to the outward viſible ſign in baptiſm: So that a man muſt, of neceſſity, be a profeſſed diſciple of the goſpel, before he can be admitted into the Church of Chriſt. And hence it is, that the words muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of diſcipling, or bringing the nations over to the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion; or elſe we muſt ſuppoſe, what ought not to be granted, that our Saviour muſt command many that were viſible enemies to his croſs, to be received into his church; for many of the Jews were taught and inſtructed in the doctrine of the goſpel, who, notwithſtanding, were inveterate enemies unto Chriſt. They were taught, that he was the Meſſiah, and Saviour of the world, and that *whoſoever believed in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; and they had all the reaſon in the world to be convinced of it: Yet, I hope, there is none will ſay, that the bare knowledge of, or tacit aſſent unto, theſe things, are a ſufficient ground for their reception into the Church.

Now, as it was in the Jewiſh church, when any one became a proſelye, not only himſelf, but whatſoever children he had, were to be circumciſed; ſo in the church of Chriſt, whenſoever any perſon is brought over into the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, his ſeed are equally inveſted with the outward privileges of it with himſelf, though they be not as yet come to years of diſcretion, nor able, of themſelves, to make their profeſſion of that religion they are to be received and baptiſed into. For, ſo long as children are in their infancy, they are (as I before obſerved) looked upon as parts of their parents, and are therefore accounted holy, by the outward profeſſion which their parents, under whom they are comprehended, make of it: and in this ſenſe, 1 *Cor.* viii. 14. *the unbelieving huſband* is ſaid to be *ſanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing huſband*, that is, man and wife being made one fleſh, they are denominated, from the better part holy, and ſo are their children too.

And hence it is, that I verily believe, that in the commiſſion which our Saviour gave to his Apoſtles, to *diſciple and baptize all nations*, he meant, that they ſhould preach the goſpel in all nations, and thereby bring over all perſons of underſtanding and diſcretion to the profeſſion of his name, and in them, their children; and to engraft both root and branch into himſelf, the true vine, by baptizing both pa-

rents and children in the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.*

The main objection againſt this is, that infants are not in a capacity either to learn and underſtand their duty in this covenant, or to ſtipulate and promiſe for their future performance of the conditions of it. But this difficulty is eaſily removed, when I conſider, that it is not by virtue of their own faith and knowledge, but that of their parents, that they are admitted to this ſacrament; nor is it required, that they ſhould ſtipulate or promiſe in their own perſons, but by their god-fathers or ſponſors, who enter into this engagement for them, and oblige them, when they come to age, to take it upon themſelves; which accordingly they do. And this engagement by *proxy*, does as effectually bind them to the performance of the conditions, as if they were actually in a capacity to have ſtipulated for themſelves, or ſealed the covenant in their own perſons. For t' ſe ſpiritual ſigns or ſeals are not deſigned to make God's word ſurer to us, but only to make our faith ſtronger in him; nor are they of the ſubſtance of the covenant, but only for the better confirmation of it.

And, as Baptiſm thus comes in the place of the Jews circumciſion, ſo doth our Lord's ſupper anſwer to their paſſover. Their paſchal lamb repreſented our Saviour CHRIST, and the ſacrificing it the ſhedding of his blood upon the croſs; and as the paſſover was the memorial of the Iſraelites redemption from Egypt's bondage, *Exod.* xii. 14. ſo is the Lord's ſupper the memorial of our redemption from the ſlavery of ſin, and aſſertion into Chriſtian liberty; or rather, it is a ſolemn and lively repreſentation of the death of Chriſt and offering it again to God, as an atonement for ſin, and reconciliation to his favour.

So that, I believe, this ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper under the goſpel, ſucceeds to the rite of ſacrificing under the law; and is properly called the Chriſtian ſacrifice, as repreſenting the ſacrifice of Chriſt upon the croſs. And the end of both is the ſame: For, as the ſacrifices under the law were deſigned as a propitiation or *atonement for ſins*, by tranſferring the puniſhment from the offerer to the thing offered, which is therefore called *The accurſed thing*, as we read Lev. xvii. 11. So, under the goſpel, we are told, that it was for this end that our Saviour died, and ſuffered in our ſtead, that he might obtain the pardon of our ſins, and reconcile us to his Father, by laying the guilt of them upon his own perſon. And accordingly, he ſays of himſelf, that *he came*

*to give his life a ranſom for many*, Matt. xx. 28. And St. Paul tells us, 2 *Cor.* v. 21. that *he was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin.*

And as the end of both inſtitutions was the ſame, ſo they were both equally extended. The paſchal lamb was ordered for all the congregation of Iſrael, and ſo is the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper to be adminiſtred to all the faithful people in Chriſt, that do not exclude themſelves from it. And for this reaſon, I believe, that as all the congregation of Iſrael was to eat the paſſover, ſo is all the ſociety of Chriſtians to receive the Lord's ſupper; thoſe only to be excepted, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of that covenant it ſeals, or openly and ſcandalouſly guilty of the breach of the conditions it requires.

But why, ſay ſome, ſhould there be any exception? Did not Chriſt die for all mankind? And is not that death ſaid to be a *full, perfect, and ſufficient ſacrifice, oblation, and ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world?* All this is true, but it does not from hence follow, that all men muſt be actually ſaved and abſolved from their ſins, by virtue of his death. No, it is only they, who apply to themſelves the merit of his paſſion, by partaking duly of this holy ſacrament, which is the proper means by which theſe bleſſings are conveyed to us, *whereby we are ſealed to the day of redemption.* I ſay, duly, becauſe though this ſacrament was ordained for all, yet all will not make themſelves worthy of it; and thoſe that are not ſo, are ſo far from reaping any benefit from it, that, as the Apoſtle ſays, *they eat and drink their own damnation, not diſcerning the Lord's Body*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. And therefore, I believe, that as in the inſtitution of the paſſover there were ſome particular duties and ceremonies enjoined for the better ſolemnization of it; ſo there are ſome preparatory duties and qualifications neceſſarily required for the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, which, before I preſume to partake of it, I muſt always uſe my utmoſt endeavours to exerciſe myſelf in. And theſe are,

*Firſt*, That I ſhould examine, confeſs, and bewail my ſins before God, with a true ſenſe of, and ſorrow for them; and taking firm reſolutions for the time to come, utterly to relinquiſh and forſake them, ſolemnly engage myſelf in a new and truly Chriſtian courſe of life.

*Secondly*, That I ſhould *be in perfect charity with all men*, i. e. That I ſhould heartily forgive thoſe who have any ways injured or offended me; and make reſtitution or ſatisfaction

to ſuch whom I have, in any reſpect, injured or offended myſelf.

*Thirdly*, That I ſhould, with an humble and obedient heart, exerciſe the acts of faith, and love, and devotion, during the celebration of that holy myſtery; and expreſs the ſenſe I have of this myſtery, by devout praiſes and thankſgivings for the great mercies and favours that God vouchſafes to me therein; and by all the ways and meaſures of charity that he has preſcribed, manifeſt my love and beneficence to my Chriſtian brethren.

Theſe are the proper graces, this the wedding-garment that every true Chriſtian, who comes to be a gueſt at this holy ſupper, ought to be cloathed and inveſted with.

*Do Thou, O bleſſed* JESUS! *adorn me with this holy robe, and inſpire my ſoul with ſuch heavenly qualities and diſpoſitions as theſe; and then I need not fear, but that as* oft as I eat the fleſh of Chriſt, and drink his blood, *I ſhall effectually obtain the pardon and remiſſion of my ſins, the ſanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit, and a certain intereſt in the kingdom of glory.*

*See farther*, Treatiſe of the ſacrament.

## ARTICLE XI.

*I believe, that after a ſhort Separation, my Soul and Body ſhall be united together again, in order to appear before the Judgment-ſeat of* CHRIST, *and be finally ſentenced according to my Deſerts.*

I KNOW this body, which, for the preſent, I am tyed to, is nothing elſe but a piece of clay, made up into the frame and faſhion of man; and therefore, as it was firſt taken from the duſt, ſo ſhall it return to duſt again: But then I believe, on the other hand, that it ſhall be as really raiſed from the earth, as ever it ſhall be carried to it; yea, though perhaps it may go through a hundred, or a thouſand changes, before that day come. There are, I confeſs, ſome points in this article, which are hardly to be ſolved by human reaſon; but, I believe, there are none ſo difficult, but what may be reconciled by a divine faith: Tho' it be too hard for me to know, yet it is not too hard for God to do. He that ſhould have told me ſome years ago, that my body then was, or ſhould be, a mixture of particles fetched from ſo many parts of the world,

and undergo ſo many changes and alterations, as to become in a manner new, ſhould ſcarce have extorted the belief of it from me, though now I perceive it to be a real truth; the meats, fruits, and ſpices, which we eat, being tranſported from ſeveral different places and nations, and, by natural digeſtion, transfuſed into the conſtitution of the body. And why ſhould not I believe, that the ſame almighty power, who made theſe ſeveral beings or particles of matter, by which I am fed and ſuſtained, can as eaſily, with his word, recall each particle again from the moſt ſecret or remote place that it can poſſibly be tranſported to? Or, that he who framed me out of the duſt, can with as much eaſe gather all the ſcattered parts of the body, and put them together again, as he at firſt formed them into ſuch a ſhape, and infuſed into it a ſpiritual Being.

And this article of my faith, I believe, is not only grounded upon, but may, even by the force of reaſon, be deduced from, the principles of juſtice and equity; juſtice requiring that they who are co-partners in vice and virtue, ſhould be co-partners alſo in puniſhments and rewards. There is ſcarce a ſin a man commits, but his body hath a ſhare in it; for tho' the ſin committed would not be a ſin without the ſoul, yet it could not be committed without the body; the ſinfulneſs of it depends upon the former, but the commiſſion of it may lawfully be charged upon the latter: The body could not ſin, if the ſoul did not conſent; nor could the ſoul ſin (eſpecially ſo oft) if the body did not tempt to it. And this is particularly obſervable in the ſins of adultery, drunkenneſs and gluttony, which the ſoul of itſelf cannot commit, neither would it ever conſent unto them, did not the prevalent humours of the body, as it were, force it to do ſo. For in theſe ſins, the act that is ſinful is wholly performed by the body, though the fulneſs of that act doth principally depend upon the ſoul.

Neither is the body only partner with the ſoul in theſe groſſer ſins; but even the more ſpiritual ſins, which ſeem to be moſt abſtracted from the temperature of the body, as if they depended only upon the pravity and corruption of the ſoul: I ſay, even theſe are partly to be aſcribed to the body. For inſtance, an atheiſtical thought, which, one would think, was to be laid upon the ſoul, becauſe the thought takes its riſe from thence; yet if we ſeriouſly weigh and conſider the matter, we ſhall find, that it is uſually the ſinful affections of the body that thus debauch the mind into theſe blaſ-

phemous thoughts: and that it is the pleaſures of ſenſe that firſt ſuggeſted them to us, and raiſe them in us. And this appears, in that there was no perſon that ever was, or indeed ever can be, an atheiſt at all times; but ſuch thoughts ſpring up in the fountain of the ſoul, only when mudded with fleſhly pleaſures. And thus it is in moſt other ſins; the carnal appetite having gotten the reins into his hand, it miſleads the reaſon, and hurries the ſoul whereſoever it pleaſeth. And, what then can be more reaſonable, than that the body ſhould be puniſhed, both for its uſurping the ſoul's prerogative, and for its tyrannizing ſo much over that, which, at the firſt, it was made to be ſubject to?

But farther, it is the body that enjoys the pleaſure, and therefore, good reaſon, that the body ſhould likewiſe bear the puniſhment of the ſin. Indeed, I cannot perceive, how it can ſtand with the principles of juſtice, but that the body, which both accompanies the ſoul in ſin, enjoys the pleaſures of it, and leads the ſoul into it, ſhould bear a ſhare in the miſeries which are due to, and inflicted upon it. For what doth juſtice require, but to puniſh the perſon that offends, for the offence he commits? whereas if the ſoul only, and not the body, were to ſuffer, the perſon would not ſuffer at all, the body being part of the perſon, as well as the ſoul, and therefore the ſoul no perſon without the body.

Hence it is, that tho' the ſcriptures had been ſilent in this point, yet methinks I could not but have believed: How much more firm and ſtedfaſt, then, ought I to be in my faith, when Truth itſelf hath been pleaſed ſo expreſly to affirm it? For this ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, *Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe*, Iſaiah xxvi. 19. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt*, Dan. xii. 2. And thus ſaith the Saviour of the world, *who is the way, the truth, and the life: The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation*, John v. 28, 29. The ſame hath it pleaſed his divine Majeſty to aſſert and prove with his own mouth, *Matth.* xxii. 31, 32. and by his Spirit, 2 *Cor.* xv. and in many other places: from all which, I may, with comfort and confidence, draw the ſame concluſion that holy Job did, and ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after*

*my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me,* Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

And, as I believe my body ſhall be thus raiſed from the grave, ſo I believe the other part of me, my ſoul, ſhall never be carried to it; I mean it ſhall never die, but ſhall be as much, yea, more alive, when I am dying, than it is now; ſo much my ſoul ſhall be the more active in itſelf, by how much it is leſs tied and ſubjected to the body.

And farther I believe, that ſo ſoon as ever my breath is out of my noſtrils, my ſoul ſhall remove her lodging into the other world, there to live as really to eternity, as I now live here in time. Yea, I am more certain, that my ſoul ſhall *return to God who gave it*, than that my body ſhall return to the earth, out of which I had it. For I know, it is poſſible my body may be made immortal, but I am ſure, my ſoul ſhall never be mortal. I know, that at the firſt, the body did equally participate of immortality with the ſoul, and that had not ſin made the divorce, they had lived together, like loving mates, to all eternity. And I dare not affirm, that Enoch and Elias underwent the common fate; or ſuppoſe they did, yet, ſure I am, the time will come, when thouſands of men and women ſhall not be diſſolved and die, but be immediately changed and caught up into heaven, or to their eternal confuſion, thruſt down into hell; whoſe bodies, therefore, ſhall undergo no ſuch thing as rotting in the grave, or being eaten up of worms, but, together with their ſouls, ſhall immediately launch into the vaſt ocean of eternity. But who ever yet read or heard of a ſoul's funeral? Who is it? Where is the man? Or, what is his name, that wrote the hiſtory of her life and death? Can any diſeaſe ariſe in a ſpiritual ſubſtance, wherein there is no ſuch thing as contrariety of principles or qualities to occaſion any diſorder or diſtemper? Can an Angel be ſick or die? And, if not an Angel, why a ſoul, which is endowed with the ſame ſpiritual nature here, and ſhall be adorned with the ſame eternal glory hereafter? No, no, deceive not thyſelf, my ſoul; for it is more certain, that thou ſhalt always live, than that thy body ſhall ever die.

Not that I think my ſoul muſt always live, in deſpite of Omnipotence itſelf, as if it was not in the power of the Almighty, to take my being and exiſtence from me; for I know, I am but a Potſherd in the Potter's hands, and that it is as

eaſy for him to daſh me in pieces now, as it was to raiſe it up at the firſt. I believe, it is as eaſy for him to command my ſoul out of its being, as out of its body; and to ſend me back into my mother's nothing, out of whoſe womb he took me, as it was at firſt to fetch me thence. I know, he could do it, if he would, but himſelf hath ſaid, he will not, and therefore, I am ſure, he cannot do it; and that, not becauſe he hath not power, but becauſe he hath not will to do it; it being impoſſible for him to do that which he doth not will to do. And that it is not his will or pleaſure ever to annihilate my ſoul, I have it under his own hand, that my *Duſt ſhall return to the earth as it was; and my ſpirit to God that gave it*, Eccleſ. xii. 7. And if it return to God, it is ſo far from returning to nothing, that it returns to the Being of all beings; and ſo death to me, will be nothing more than going home to my father and mother; my ſoul goes to my father, God; and my body to my mother, Earth.

Thus, likewiſe, hath it pleaſed his ſacred Majeſty to aſſure me, that if "our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 *Cor.* v. 1." ſo clearly hath the great God 'brought life and immortality to light thro' the goſpel,' 2 *Tim.* i. 10. The light of nature ſhews, the ſoul can never periſh or be diſſolved, without the immediate interpoſition of God's omnipotence, and we have his own divine word for it, that he will never uſe that power, in the diſſolution of it. And therefore I may, with the greateſt aſſurance, affirm and believe, that as really as I now live, ſo really ſhall I never die; but that my ſoul, at the very moment of its departure from the fleſh, ſhall immediately mount up to the tribunal of the moſt High God, there to be judged, firſt privately, by itſelf, (or perhaps with ſome other ſouls that ſhall be ſummoned to appear before God the ſame moment:) And then, from theſe private ſeſſions, I believe that every ſoul that ever was, or ſhall be ſeparated from the body, muſt either be received into the manſions of heaven, or elſe ſent down to the dungeon of hell, there to remain till the grand aſſizes, the *judgment of the great day, when the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. And when our bodies, by the word of the Almighty God, ſhall be thus called together again, I believe that our ſouls ſhall be all prepared to meet them, and be united again to them, and ſo both *appear before the Judgment-Seat of* CHRIST, *to receive ſen-*

*tence according to what they have done in the fleſh, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* And, though it is very difficult, or rather impoſſible, for me to conceive or determine the particular circumſtance of this grand aſſize, or manner and method how it ſhall be managed, yet, from the light and intimations that God has vouchſafed to give us of it, I have ground to believe, it will be ordered and carried after this, or the like manner.

The day and place being appointed by the King of kings, the glorious Majeſty of heaven, and Saviour of the world, JESUS CHRIST, who long ago received his commiſſion from the Father, to be the *judge of the quick and dead*, John v. 22. Acts xvii. 31. *ſhall deſcend from heaven with the ſhout of the Archangel, and with the trump of God*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. royally attended with an innumerable company of *glorious Angels*, Matt. xxv. 51. Theſe he ſhall ſend with the great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other, *chap.* xxiv. 31. yea, and the wicked too, from whatſoever place they ſhall be in; and then ſhall he *ſever the wicked from the juſt*, Matth. xiii. 49. So that all nations, and every particular perſon, that ever did, or ever ſhall live upon the face of the earth, ſhall be gathered together before him, and he ſhall ſeparate the one from the other, as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats, and he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, and the goats upon the left, *Matth.* xxv. 32, 33.

Things being thus ſet in order, the Judge ſhall read his commiſſion, *i. e.* declare and manifeſt himſelf to be the Judge of all the earth, ſent by the God of heaven to judge them that had condemned him, and, in that very body, that was once crucified upon the croſs, at Jeruſalem, for our ſins. So that all the world ſhall then behold him ſhinning in all his Glory and Majeſty, and ſhall acknowledge him to be now, what they would not believe him to be before, even both God and Man, and ſo the Judge of all the world, from whom there can be no appeal.

And having thus declared his commiſſion, I believe the firſt work he will go upon, will be to open the *book of God's remembrance*, and to cauſe all the indictments to be read, that are there found on record againſt thoſe on his right hand; but behold, all the black lines of their ſins being blotted out with the red lines of their Saviour's blood, and nothing but their good works, their prayers, their ſermons,

their meditations, their alms and the like, to be found there; the righteous Judge, before whom they ſtand, turning himſelf before them, with a ſerene and ſmiling countenance, will declare to them before all the world, that their ſins are pardoned, and their perſons accepted by him, as having believed in him; and therefore will he immediately proceed to pronounce the happy ſentence of election on them, ſaying, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

The ſentence being thus pronounced, the righteous (and I hope myſelf amongſt the reſt) ſhall go up with ſhouts of joy and triumph, to ſit with our bleſſed Redeemer, to judge the other parts of the world, who ſit at the left hand of the tribunal, with ghaſtly countenances and trembling hearts, to receive their laſt and dreadful doom. Againſt theſe all the ſins that they commited, or were guilty of, ſhall be brought up in judgment againſt them, as they are found on record in the book of God's remembrance, and the indictments read againſt every particular perſon, high or low, for every particular ſin, great or ſmall, which they have committed.

And the truth of this indictment ſhall be atteſted by their own conſciences, crying, Guilty, guilty: I ſay, by their own conſciences, which are as a thouſand witneſſes: yea, and by the omniſcience of God too, which is as a thouſand conſciences. And therefore, without any farther delay, ſhall the Judge proceed to pronounce the ſentence, the doleful ſentence of condemnation upon them, *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

This, I believe, or ſuch like, will be the method of Chriſt's proceeding with us in that great and terrible day of tryal and retribution.

Oh! *may theſe awful thoughts and ideas of it always accompany me, and ſtrike ſuch a deep and lively impreſſion upon my heart, in every action of life, as to deter me from offending this juſt and Almighty Being, in whoſe power it is* to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell; *and engage me in ſuch a regular, ſtrict, and conſcientious courſe of life, as to be always ready, whenever he ſhall pleaſe to ſummon me, to give in my accounts at the great Audit, and with an holy aſſurance fly for mercy and ſuccour into the hands of my Redeemer, and be permitted to* enter into the joys of his reſt?

## ARTICLE XII.

*I believe there are two other worlds, beſides this I live in; a world of miſery for unrepenting ſinners, and a world of glory for believing ſaints.*

WHEN death hath opened the cage of fleſh, wherein the ſoul is penned up, whither it flies, or how it ſubſiſts, I think it not eaſy to determine, or indeed to conceive. As for the Platonic Aerial and Ætherial Vehicles, ſucceeding this Terreſtrial one, I find neither mention of, nor warrant for them, in the word of God. And, indeed, to ſuppoſe that a ſpiritual ſubſtance cannot ſubſiſt of itſelf, without being ſupported by a corporeal Vehicle, is, in my opinion, too groſs a conceit for any philoſopher, much more for one that profeſſes himſelf a divine, to advance or entertain. Only this I am ſure of, that according to the diſtinction of lives here into good or bad, and the ſentence paſſed upon all hereafter, of abſolution or condemnation, there will be a twofold receptacle for the ſouls of men, the one of happineſs, and the other of miſery.

As to the firſt, I believe, that at the great and general aſſizes of the world, there will be a glorious entrance opened for the righteous into the Holy of Holineſs, the ſeat and fountain of all bliſs and happineſs, where they ſhall draw nigh to the moſt high God, *behold his preſence in righteouſneſs*, and reign with him for ever in glory, where they ſhall ſee him *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *and know him the only true God*, and Jeſus Chriſt *whom he hath ſent*, John xvii. 3. And this knowing and beholding God face to face, is, I believe, the very heaven of heavens, even the higheſt happineſs that it is poſſible a creature ſhould be made capable of: For in having a perfect knowledge of God, we ſhall have a perfect knowledge of all things that ever were, are, ſhall, yea, or can, be in the world. For God being the Being of all beings, in ſeeing him, we ſhall not only ſee whatſoever hath been, but whatſoever can be communicated from him. The contemplation of which, cannot but raviſh and tranſport my ſpirit beyond itſelf; eſpecially, when I conſider, that in knowing this One-All-Things, God, I cannot but enjoy whatſoever it is poſſible any creature ſhould enjoy. For the knowing of a thing is the ſoul's enjoyment of it; the under-

ſtanding being to the ſoul, what the ſenſes are to the body. And, therefore, as the body enjoys nothing but by its ſenſes, ſo neither doth the ſoul enjoy any thing but by its underſtanding. And, as the body is ſaid to have whatſoever affects its proper ſenſes, ſo may the ſoul be ſaid to have whatſoever comes under its knowledge. Nay, the ſoul ſo far hath what it knows, that in a manner, it is what it knows; itſelf being, in a ſpiritual manner, enlarged, according to the extent of the objects which it knows, as the body is by the meat it eats; the truths we know turning into ſubſtance of our ſouls, as the meat we eat doth into the ſubſtance of our bodies.

But oh! what a rare ſoul ſhall I then have, when it ſhall be extended to every thing that ever was, or ever could have been! What a happy creature ſhall I then be, when I ſhall know, and ſo enjoy him that is all things in himſelf! what can a creature deſire more? yea, what more can a creature be made capable of enjoying or deſiring! And that which always will accompany this our knowledge and enjoyment, is, perfect love to what we enjoy and know, without which we ſhould take pleaſure in nothing, though we ſhould have all things to take pleaſure in. But who will be able not to love the chiefeſt good, that knows and enjoys him, and therefore enjoys him becauſe he knows him? Queſtionleſs, in heaven, as I ſhall enjoy whatſoever I can love, ſo ſhall I love whatſoever I enjoy. And this, therefore, I believe to be the perfection of my happineſs, and the happineſs of my perfection, in the other world; that I ſhall perfectly know and love, and ſo, perfectly enjoy and rejoice in the moſt High God; and ſhall be, as known, ſo perfectly loved, and rejoiced in him. And queſtionleſs, for all our ſhallow apprehenſions and low eſtimations of theſe things now, they cannot chuſe but be vaſt and unconceivable pleaſures, too great for any creature to enjoy, whilſt here below.

If we have but the leaſt drop of theſe pleaſures diſtilled into us here upon earth, how ſtrangely do they make us, as it were, beſide ourſelves, by lifting us above ourſelves! If we can but at any time get a glimpſe of God, and of his love to us, how are we immediately carried beyond all other pleaſures and contentments whatſoever! How apt are we to ſay with *Peter*, *it is good for us to be here!* and if the fore-taſtes of the bleſſings of Canaan, if the dark intimation of God's love to us, be ſo unſpeakably pleaſant, ſo raviſhing delightſome; Oh! what will the full poſſeſſion of him be! What tranſporting ecſtaſies of love and joy ſhall thoſe bleſſed ſouls

be poſſeſſed with, who ſhall behold the King of glory ſmiling upon them, rejoicing over them, and ſhining forth in all his love and glory upon them! Oh! what aſtoniſhing beauty will they then behold! What flowing, what refreſhing pleaſures ſhall then ſolace and delight their ſpirits, unto all eternity! Pleaſures! far greater then I am able either to expreſs or conceive, much leſs to enjoy, on this ſide heaven! my faculties are now too narrow and ſcanty for ſuch an entertainment, and therefore, till they are ſpiritualized and enlarged, they cannot receive it! This is the portion only of another world, this the *Crown of righteouſneſs*, which the *Lord the righteous Judge* reſerves in heaven for me, and which at his ſecond coming, he has promiſed to beſtow upon me, and not upon me only, but *upon all them alſo that love his appearing*.

As to the other ſtate, *viz.* that of the wicked in another life, I believe it will be as exquiſitely miſerable and wretched, as that of the righteous is happy and glorious. They will be *driven for ever from the preſence of the* LORD, from thoſe bright and bleſſed regions above, where CHRIST *ſits at the right hand of GOD*, to thoſe dark and diſmal dungeons below, where the devil and his angels are for ever doomed to be tormented.

What ſort of torments or puniſhments they are there to undergo, I am as unable to expreſs, as I am unwilling ever to experience; but according to the notions which Scripture and reaſon give me of theſe matters, I believe they will be twofold, *viz.* 1. *Privative*, and, 2. *Poſitive*, i. e. The wicked will not only be deprived of all that is good and happy, but actually condemned to all that is evil and miſerable; and this in the moſt tranſcendent degree.

The firſt part of their puniſhment will conſiſt in Envious, Melancholy, and Self-condemning reflections upon their having defeated, and deprived themſelves, nor only of their carnal mirth and ſenſual enjoyments, their friends, fortunes, and eſtates in this world, but alſo of all the infinite joys and glories of the next, the preſence of God, the ſociety of ſaints and angels, and all the refreſhing and raviſhing delights which flow from the fruition of the chiefeſt good. And what adds yet farther to their anguiſh and remorſe, is, that they have loſt the hopes of ever regaining any of theſe enjoyments!

Oh! how infinitely tormenting and vexatious muſt ſuch a condition be, which at once gives them a view both of the greateſt happineſs and the greateſt miſery, without the leaſt

hopes either of recovering the one, or being delivered from the other! How muſt they tear, torment, and curſe themſelves for their former follies; and too late, wiſh that they had been ſtifled in the womb, or drowned in the font which was to be their ſecond birth?

And, if the late privation of heaven and happineſs be ſo miſerable and tormenting, how will it rack their conſciences, and fill their ſouls with horror and amazement, to behold the eternal GOD, the glorious Jehovah, in the fierceneſs of his wrath, continually threatening to pour out his vengeance upon them! how much more, when he poſitively conſigns them over to the power of the devil, to execute his judgment in full meaſure! when they are gnawed upon by the worm of their own conſciences, feel the wrath of the Almighty flaming in their hearts, and fire and brimſtone their continual torture! and all this, without the leaſt alloy or mixture of refreſhment, or the leaſt hopes of ending or ceſſation.

In a word, when they have nothing elſe to expect but miſery for their portion, weeping and wailing for their conſtant employment, and the devil and damned fiends their only companions to all eternity: and this is that world of miſery, which all that will not be perſuaded to believe in Chriſt here, muſt be doomed for ever to live in hereafter.

I know the ſubjects of this article were never the objects of my ſight, tho' they are of my faith. I never yet ſaw heaven or hell, the places I am now ſpeaking of; but why ſhould my faith be ſtaggered or diminiſhed becauſe of that; I never ſaw Rome, Conſtantinople, or the flaming Sicilian hill Etna, yet I believe there is ſuch a burning mountain, and ſuch glorious cities; becauſe others, who have been there, have told me ſo, and faithful writers have related and deſcribed them to me. And ſhall I believe my fellow-worms, and not my great Creator, who is Truth itſelf? What tho' I never did ſee New Jeruſalem that is above, nor the flaming Tophet that is below; yet ſince God himſelf hath both related and deſcribed them to me, why ſhould I doubt of them? Why ſhould not I, a thouſand times ſooner, believe them to be, than if I had ſeen them with my own eyes? I cannot ſo much believe, that I now have a pen in my hand, have a book before me, and am writing, as I do and ought to believe that I ſhall, one day, and that ere long, be either in heaven or hell; in the height of happineſs, or in the depth of miſery.

I know my ſenſes are fallible, and therefore may deceive me, but my God, I am ſure, cannot. And therefore let others raiſe doubts and ſcruples as they pleaſe, I am as fully ſatisfied and convinced of the truth of this article, as any of the reſt.

*Do thou, O my God, keep me ſtedfaſt in this faith, and give me grace ſo to fit and prepare myſelf to appear before thee, in the white robes of purity and holineſs in another world, that whenever my diſſolution comes, I may chearfully reſign my ſpirit into the hands of my Creator and Redeemer; and from this crazy houſe of clay, take my flight into the manſions of glory*; where CHRIST ſits at the right hand of God; *and, with the joyful Choir of Saints, and Angels, and the bleſſed ſpirits of* juſt men made perfect, *chant forth thy praiſes to all eternity.*

## RESOLUTIONS *formed upon the foregoing* ARTICLES.

AS obedience without faith is impoſſible, ſo faith without obedience is vain and unprofitable: *For as the body*, ſays St. *James*, *without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without good works is dead alſo*, James ii. 26. Having therefore, I hope, laid a ſure foundation, by reſolving what, and how, to believe, I ſhall now, by the grace of God, reſolve ſo to order my converſation, in all circumſtances and conditions of life, as to raiſe a good ſuperſtructure upon it, and to finiſh the work God has given me to do, *i. e.* ſo as to love and pleaſe God in this world, as to enjoy and be happy with him for ever in the next. And it is abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould be ſpeedy and ſerious in theſe reſolutions; eſpecially when I reflect with myſelf how much of my time I have already ſpent upon the vanities and follies of youth, and how much enhanced and increaſed this work, by acquired guilt, by ſettled and repeated habits of ſin, which are not without great difficulty to be atoned for, and removed. My heart, alas! is now more hardened in iniquity, more puffed with pride, and more averſe from God, than when I firſt entered into covenant with him; and I have added many actual ſins and provocations to my original guilt and pollution; inſtead of glorifying God, I have diſhonoured him; and, inſtead of

working out my own ſalvation, I have taken a pleaſure and delight in ſuch things, as would, in the end, be my ruin and deſtruction. So that, before I can be able to make any progreſs in the duties of religion, or walk in the paths that lead to life, I muſt firſt be freed and diſentangled from theſe weights and incumbrances that clog and retard me in my ſpiritual courſe; I muſt have my heart cleanſed and ſoftened, humbled and converted to God, and all my tranſgreſſions purged and pardoned by the merits of my Redeemer. And then being fully perſuaded, that there is no way for me to come to the joys of heaven, but by walking according to the ſtricteſt rules of holineſs upon earth, I muſt endeavour for the future, by a thorough change and reformation of my life, to act in conformity to the divine will and pleaſure in all things *and perfect holineſs in the fear of the* LORD: For the moſt High has told me in his word, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the* LORD.

In order, therefore, to qualify myſelf for this happineſs, it will be neceſſary for me to ſettle firm and ſteady reſolutions, to fulfil my duty, in all the ſeveral branches of it, to God, my neighbour, and myſelf; and to take care theſe reſolutions be put in practice according to the following method.

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to walk by rule, and therefore think it neceſſary to reſolve upon the rules to walk by.*

AND this rather, becauſe I perceive the want of ſuch rules has been the occaſion of all, or moſt of my miſcarriages. For, what other reaſon can I aſſign to myſelf, for having trifled and ſinned away ſo much time, as I have done in my younger years, but becauſe I did not thoroughly reſolve to ſpend it better? What is the reaſon I have hitherto lived ſo unſerviceably to God, ſo unprofitably to others, and ſo ſinfully againſt my own ſoul; but becauſe I did not apply myſelf with that ſincerity of reſolution, diligence, and circumſpection, as a wiſe man ought to have done, to diſcharge my duty in theſe particulars? I have, indeed, often reſolved to bid adieu to my ſins and follies, and to enter upon a new courſe of life; but theſe reſolutions being not rightly formed upon ſteady principles, the firſt temptation made way for a relapſe, and the ſame bait that firſt allured me,

has no ſooner been thrown in my way, but I have been as ready to catch at it again, and as greedy to ſwallow it, as ever. At other times, again, I have acted without any thought or reſolution at all; and then, though ſome of my actions might be good in themſelves, yet being done by chance, and without any true deſign or intention, they could not be imputed to me as good, but rather the quite contrary: So that, in this reſpect, the want of reſolution has not only been the occaſion of my ſinful actions, but the corruption of my good ones too. And ſhall I ſtill go on in this looſe and careleſs manner, as I have formerly done? No, I now reſolve with myſelf, in the preſence of the moſt high and eternal God, not only in general, to walk by rule, but to fix the rule I deſign to walk by; ſo that, in all my thoughts and words, and actions, in all places, companies, relations, and conditions, I may ſtill have a ſure guide at hand to direct me, ſuch a one as I can ſafely depend upon without any danger of being deceived or miſled, *i. e.* the holy Scripture. And therefore,

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of God, to make the Divine Word the* Rule *of all the* Rules *I propoſe to myſelf.*

AS the will of God is the rule and meaſure of all that is good, ſo there is nothing deſerves that name, but what is agreeable and conformable thereto: And this will being fully revealed and contained in the holy Scripture, it will be neceſſary for me in directing my courſe over the ocean of this world, that I ſhould fix my eye continually upon this ſtar, ſteer by this compaſs, and make it the only land mark, by which I am to be guided to my wiſh'd for haven. I muſt not, therefore, have recourſe to the inward workings of my own roving fancy, or the corrupt dictates of my own carnal reaſon: Theſe are but blind guides, and will certainly lead me into the ditch of error, hereſy and irreligion, which in theſe our ſelf-admiring days, ſo many poor ſouls have been plunged in. Alas! how many hath the impetuous torrent of blind zeal and erroneous conſcience borne down into a will-worſhip and voluntary ſubjection of themſelves to the ſpurious offſpring of their own deluded fancies! If the light that is within them doth but dictate any thing to be done; or rather if

the whimſy doth but take them, that they muſt do thus or thus, they preſently ſet about it, without ever conſulting the ſacred writings, to ſee whether it is acceptable to God, or diſpleaſing to him. Whereas, for my own part, I know not how any thing ſhould be worthy of God's accepting, that is not of God's commanding. I am ſure the word of God is the good old way that will certainly bring me to my father's houſe; for how ſhould that way but lead to heaven, which Truth itſelf hath chalked out for me? Not as if it was neceſſary, that every one of my reſolutions ſhould be contained word for word, in the holy Scriptures; it is ſufficient that they be implied in, and agreeable thereto. So that, though the manner of my expreſſions may not be found in the word of God, yet the matter of my reſolutions may be clearly drawn from thence. But let me dive a little into the depth of my ſinful heart! What's the reaſon of my thus reſolving upon ſuch an exact conformity to the will and word of God? Is it to work my way to heaven with my own hands? to purchaſe an inheritance in the land of Canaan, with the price of my own holineſs and religion? or to ſwim over the ocean of this world, into the haven of happineſs, upon the empty bladders of my own reſolutions? No.

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the Divine Grace; ſo I will not pretend to merit any Favour from GOD, upon account of any Thing I do for His Glory and Service.*

AND indeed, I may very well put this reſolution amongſt the reſt; for ſhould I reſolve to perform my reſolutions by mine own ſtrength, I might as well reſolve never to perform them at all: For Truth itſelf, and mine own woful experience hath convinced me, that I am not able, of myſelf, ſo much as to think a good thought: and how, then, ſhall I be able of myſelf, to reſolve upon rules of holineſs according to the word of God, or to order my converſation according to theſe reſolutions, without the concurrence of the Divine Grace? Alas! ſhould the great God be pleaſed to leave me to myſelf to reſolve upon what is agreeable to my corrupt nature, what ſtrange kind of reſolutions ſhould I make? what ſhould I reſolve upon? certainly, only nothing

but to gratify my carnal appetite with ſenſual and ſinful pleaſures, to indulge myſelf in riot and exceſs, to ſpend my time, and ravel out my parts and talents, in the ravels of ſin and vanity. But now, *to live holily, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, to deny my own will, that I may fulfil the will of God; alas! ſuch reſolutions as theſe would never ſo much as come into my thoughts, much leſs would they diſcover themſelves in my outward converſation.

But, ſuppoſe I ſhould be able to make good reſolutions, and fulfil them exactly in my life and actions; yet, what ſhould I do more than my duty? And what ſhould I be eſteemed of for doing that? Alas! this is ſo far from puffing me up, that I am verily perſuaded ſhould I ſpend all my time, my parts, my ſtrength, my gifts, for God, and all my eſtate upon the poor; ſhould I water my couch continually with my tears, and faſt my body into a ſkeleton; ſhould I employ each moment of my life in the immediate worſhip of my glorious Creator; ſo that all my actions, from my birth to my death, ſhould be but one continued act of holineſs and obedience; in a word, ſhould I live like an Angel in heaven, and die like a ſaint on earth, yet I know no truer, nor ſhould I deſire any better epitaph to be engraven upon my tomb than this, *Here lies an unprofitable ſervant.* No, no; it is CHRIST, and CHRIST alone that my ſoul muſt ſupport itſelf upon. It is holineſs, indeed, that is the way to heaven; but there is none, none but CHRIST can lead me to it. As the worſt of my ſins are pardonable by CHRIST, ſo are the beſt of my duties damnable without him.

But if ſo, then whither tend my reſolutions? Why ſo ſtrict, ſo circumſpect a converſation? Why, it is to juſtify that faith before others, and mine own conſcience, which, I hope, thro' CHRIST, ſhall juſtify my ſoul before God. And I believe farther, that the holier I live here, the happier I ſhall live hereafter; for though I ſhall not be ſaved for my works, yet I believe, I ſhall be ſaved according to them. And thus, as I dare not expect to be ſaved by the performance of my reſolutions without CHRIST's merit, ſo neither do I ever expect to be enabled to perform my reſolutions, without his ſpirit aſſiſting me therein.

No, *it is thyſelf, my God, and my guide, that I wholly and ſolely depend upon! Oh! for thine own ſake, for thy Son's ſake, and for thy promiſe ſake, do thou both make me to know what thou wouldſt have me to do, and then help me to do what thou wouldſt have me to know! Teach me firſt what to reſolve.*

*upon, and then enable me to perform my reſolutions; that I may walk with thee in the ways of holineſs here, and reſt with thee in the joys of happineſs hereafter!*

*Concerning my Converſation in general.*

HAVING thus far determined in general, to form reſolutions for the better regulating of my life, I muſt now deſcend to particulars, and ſettle ſome rules with myſelf, to reſolve my future life and converſation wholly into holineſs and religion. I know this is a hard taſk to do; but I am ſure, it is no more than what my God and my Father has ſet me; why therefore ſhould I think much to do it? Shall I grudge to ſpend my life for him, who did not grudge to ſpend his own blood for me! Shall not I ſo live, that he may be glorified here on earth, who died that I might be glorified in heaven; eſpecially conſidering, that if my whole life could be ſublimated into holineſs, and moulded into an exact conformity unto the will of the moſt High, I ſhould be happy beyond expreſſion? Oh! what a heaven ſhould I then have on earth! What raviſhments of love and joy would my ſoul be continually poſſeſſed with! Well; I am reſolved, by the grace of God, to try; and to that end, do, this morning, wholly ſequeſter and ſet myſelf apart for God, reſolving, by the aſſiſtance of his grace, to make all and every thought, word, and action, to pay their tribute unto him. Let this man mind his profit; a ſecond, his pleaſures; a third, his honours; a fourth, himſelf; and all their ſins; I am reſolved to mind and ſerve my God, ſo as to make him the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt of my whole life. And, that I may always have an exact copy before me, to write and frame every letter of this my life by;

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to make* Chriſt *the Pattern of my Life here, that ſo* Chriſt *may be the Portion of my Soul hereafter.*

LET the whole world go whither it will, I am reſolved to walk in the ſteps that my Saviour went in before me:

I ſhall endeavour in all places I come into, in all companies I converſe with, in all the duties I undertake, in all the miſeries I undergo, ſtill to behave myſelf as my Saviour would do, was he in my place. So that whereſoever I am, or whatſoever I am about, I ſhall ſtill put this queſtion to myſelf, Would my Saviour go hither? Would he do this or that? And, every morning, conſider with myſelf, Suppoſe my Saviour was in my ſtead, had my buſineſs to do, how would he demean himſelf this day? How meek and lowly would he be in his carriage and deportment? How circumſpect in his walking? How ſavoury in his diſcourſe? How heavenly in all, even his earthly employments? well, and I am reſolved, by ſtrength from himſelf, to follow him as near as poſſible. I know, I can never hope perfectly to tranſcribe this copy, but I muſt endeavour to imitate it in the beſt manner I can, that ſo by doing as he did, in time I may be where he is to all eternity. But alas! his life was ſpiritual, and *I am carnal, ſold under ſin*; and every pretty object that doth but pleaſe my ſenſes, will be apt to divert and draw away my ſoul from following his ſteps. In order, therefore, to prevent this,

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to walk by Faith, and not by Sight, on Earth, that ſo I may live by Sight, and not by Faith, in Heaven.*

AND truly, this reſolution is ſo neceſſary to the performance of all the reſt, that without it I can do nothing, with it I can do every thing that is required. The reaſon why I am ſo much taken with the garniſh and ſeeming beauty of this world's vanities, ſo as to ſtep out of the road of holineſs to catch at, or delight myſelf in them, is only becauſe I look upon them with an eye of ſenſe. For could I behold every thing with the eye of faith, I ſhould judge of them, not as they ſeem to me, but as they are in themſelves, *Vanity and vexation of ſpirit*. For, faith has a quick and piercing eye, that can look through the outward ſuperficies, into the inward eſſence of things. It can look through the pleaſing bait to the hidden hook, view the ſting, as well as the honey, the everlaſting puniſhment, as well as the temporal contentment there is in ſin. It is, as the Apoſtle very well defines

it *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. xi. 1. It is the ſubſtance of whatſoever is promiſed by God to me, or expected by me from him: So that, by faith, whatſoever I hope for in Heaven, I may have the ſubſtance of upon earth: and it is *the evidence of things not ſeen*, the preſence of what is abſent, the clear demonſtration of what would otherwiſe ſeem impoſſible; ſo that I can clearly diſcern, as thro' a perſpective, hidden things, and things afar off, as if they were open, and juſt at hand; I can look into the deepeſt myſteries, as fully revealed, and ſee heaven and eternity as juſt ready to receive me.

And, Oh, could I but always look thro' this glaſs, and be conſtantly upon the mount, taking a view of the land of Canaan, what dreams and ſhadows would all things here below appear to be? Well, by the Grace of God, I am reſolved no longer to tye myſelf to ſenſe and ſight, the ſordid and trifling affairs of this life, but always to walk as one of the other world, to behave myſelf in all places, and at all times, as one already poſſeſſed of my inheritance, and an inhabitant of the New Jeruſalem: by faith aſſuring myſelf I have but a few more days to live below, a little more work to do: and then I ſhall lay aſide my glaſs; and be admitted to a nearer viſion and fruition of God, and *ſee him face to face*.

By this means, I ſhall always live, as if I was daily to die; always ſpeak, as if my tongue, the next moment, were to cleave to the roof of my mouth: and continually order my thoughts and affections in ſuch a manner, as if my ſoul were juſt ready to depart, and take its flight into the other world. By this means, whatſoever place I am in, or whatſoever work I am about, I ſhall ſtill be with my God, and demean myſelf ſo, as if, with St. Jerome, I heard the voice of the trumpet crying out, *Awake ye dead, and come to judgment*.

And thus, though I am at preſent here in the fleſh, yet I ſhall look upon myſelf as more really an inhabitant of heaven, than I am upon earth. Here I am but as a *Pilgrim*, or a *Sojourner*, that has *no abiding city*; but there I have a ſure and everlaſting inheritance, which CHRIST has purchaſed and prepared for me, and which faith has given me the poſſeſſion of. And, therefore, as it is my duty, ſo I will conſtantly make it my endeavour, to live up to the character of a true Chriſtian, whoſe portion and converſation is in heaven, and think it a diſgrace and diſparagement to my profeſſion, to ſtoop to, or entangle myſelf with ſuch toys, and trifles, as

the men of the world buſy themſelves about; or to feed upon huſks with ſwine here below, when it is in my power, by faith, to be continually ſupplied with ſpiritual manna from heaven, till at laſt I am admitted to it. And that I may awe my ſpirit into the performance of theſe, and all other my reſolutions,

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, always to be looking upon God, as always looking upon me.*

WHERESOEVER I am, or whatſoever I am doing, muſt ſtill conſider the Eye of the Great God, as directly intent upon me, viewing and obſerving all my thoughts, words, and actions, and writing them down in the book of his remembrance, and that all theſe, unleſs they be waſhed out with the tears of repentance, and croſſed with the blood of my crucified Saviour, muſt ſtill remain on record, and be brought in judgment againſt me at the Great day. That therefore, I may always behave myſelf as in his preſence, it behoves me thoroughly to conſider, and be perſuaded, not only that my outward man, but even alſo the ſecret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my ſoul, all the ſeveral windings and turnings of my heart, are exactly known and manifeſt, as anatomized before him. He knows what I am now a-thinking, doing, and writing, as well as I do myſelf; yea, he ſees every word whilſt it is in my heart, before it be brought forth and ſet down. He knows all the reſolutions I have made, and how often, poor creature! I have broken them already, ſince I made them.

Upon this conſideration, I reſolve to ſtand my ground againſt all temptations, and whenever I find myſelf in danger to be drawn aſide by them, to oppoſe the bent of my corrupt affections, by theſe or the like queſtions: Am I really in the preſence of the Almighty, the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, and ſhall I preſume to affront him to his face, by doing ſuch things as I know are odious and diſpleaſing to him! I would not commit adultery in the preſence of my fellow-creatures, and ſhall I do it in the preſence of the glorious Jehovah? I would not ſteal in the ſight of an earthly judge, and ſhall I do it before the Judge of all the world: if fear and ſhame from men have ſuch an influence upon me, as to

deter me from the commiſſion of ſin, how ought I to be moved with the apprehenſions of God's inſpection, who does not only know my tranſgreſſions, but will eternally puniſh me for them?

May theſe thoughts and conſiderations always take place in my heart, and be accompanied with ſuch happy effects in my converſation, that I may live with God upon earth, and ſo love and fear his preſence in this world, that I may for ever enjoy his glory in the next?

## *Concerning my* THOUGHTS.

BUT who am I, poor, proud, ſinful duſt and aſhes, that I ſhould expect to live ſo holy, ſo heavenly, as is here ſuppoſed! *Can Grapes be gathered from Thorns, or Figs from Thiſtles?* Can the fruit be ſweet, when the root is bitter? Or the ſtreams healthful, when the fountain is poiſoned? No, I muſt either get me a new and better heart, or elſe it will be impoſſible for me ever to lead a new and better life. But how muſt I come by this pearl of ineſtimable value, a new heart? Can I purchaſe it with my own riches? or find it in my own field? Can I raiſe it from ſin to holineſs? from earth to heaven? or from myſelf to God? Alas! I have endeavoured it, but I find by woful experience, I cannot attain to it: I have been lifting and heaving again and again, to raiſe it out of the mire and clay of ſin and corruption; but alas! it will not ſtir: I have rubbed and chafed it with one threatening after another, and all to get heat and life into it; but ſtill it is as cold and dead as ever: I have brought it to the promiſes, and ſet it under the dropping of the ſanctuary; I have ſhewn it the beauty of Chriſt, and the deformity of ſin; but yet it is a hard and ſinful, an earthly and ſenſual heart ſtill. What, therefore, ſhall I do with it? O my God, I bring it unto thee! Thou that madeſt it a heart at firſt, canſt only make it a new heart now! O do thou purify and refine it, and *renew a right ſpirit within me!* Do thou take it into thy hands, and out of thine infinite goodneſs, new mould it up, by thine own grace, into an exact conformity to thy own will? Do thou but give me a new heart, and I ſhall promiſe thee, by thy grace, to lead a new life, and become a new creature! Do thou but clear the fountain, and I ſhall endeavour to look to the ſtreams that flow

from it, which that I may be able to do with the better ſucceſs,

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to watch as much over the inward Motions of my Heart, as the outward Actions of my Life.*

FOR, my heart, I perceive is the womb, in which all ſin is firſt conceived, and from which, my Saviour tells me, *proceed evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornications, Murders, Thefts, Covetouſneſs, Wickedneſs, Deceit, Laſciviouſneſs, an evil Eye, Blaſphemy, Pride, Fooliſhneſs,* Mark vii. 21, 22. So that, as ever I would prevent the commiſſion of theſe ſins in my life, I muſt endeavour to hinder their conception in my heart, following the wiſe man's counſel, *to keep my heart with all diligence, becauſe out of it are the iſſues of life,* Prov. iv. 23. Neither is this the only Reaſon, why I ſhould ſet ſo ſtrict a watch over my heart, becauſe ſinful thoughts lead to ſinful acts; but becauſe the thoughts themſelves are ſinful, yea, the very firſt-born of iniquity; which though men cannot pry into or diſcover, yet the All-ſeeing God knows and obſerves, and remembers them, as well as the greateſt actions of all my life. And oh! what wicked and prophane thoughts have I formerly entertained, not only againſt God, but againſt Chriſt, by queſtioning the juſtice of his laws, and doubting of the truth of his revelation, ſo as to make both his Life and Death of none effect to me! which that they may never be laid to my charge hereafter, I humbly beſeech God to pardon and abſolve me from them, and to give me grace, for the remainder of my life, to be as careful of thinking, as of doing well, and as fearful of offending him in my heart, as of tranſgreſſing his laws in my life and converſation. To this end,

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to ſtop every Thought, at its firſt entering into my Heart, and to examine it whence it comes, and whither it tends.*

SO ſoon as ever any new thought begins to bubble in my ſoul, I am reſolved to examine what ſtamp it is of, whether it ſprings from the pure fountain of living waters, or the polluted ſtreams of my own affections; as alſo, which way it tends, or takes its courſe, towards the ocean of happineſs, or pit of deſtruction. And the reaſon of this my reſolution, I draw from the experience I have had of the devil's temptations, and the working of my own corruptions; by which I find, that there is no ſin I am betrayed into, but what takes its riſe from my inward thoughts. Theſe are the tempters that firſt preſent ſome pleaſing object to my view, and then biaſs my underſtanding, and prevent my will, to comply with the ſuggeſtion. So that, tho' the ſpirit of God is pleaſed to dart a beam into my heart at the ſame time, and ſhew me the odious and dangerous effects of ſuch thoughts; yet I know not how or why, I find a prevailing ſuggeſtion within, that tells me, it is but a thought, and that ſo long as it goes no farther, it cannot do me much hurt. Under this ſpecious colour and pretence, I ſecretly perſuade myſelf to dwell a little longer upon it; and finding my heart pleaſed and delighted with its natural iſſue, I give it a little farther indulgence, till, at laſt, my deſire breaks out into a flame, and will be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the enjoyment of the object it is exerciſed upon. And what water can quench ſuch a raging fire, as is thus kindled by the devil, and blown up by the bellows of my own inordinate affections, which the more I think of, the more I encreaſe the flame? How nearly therefore does it concern me to take up this reſolution, of ſetting a conſtant watch and guard at the door of my heart, that nothing may enter in, without a ſtrict examination? Not as if I could examine every particular thought that ariſes in my heart, for by that means I could do nothing elſe but examine my thoughts without intermiſſion. But this I muſt do: Whenſoever I find any thought that bears the face or appearance of ſin, I muſt throw it aſide with the utmoſt abhorrence: And when it comes in diſguiſe, as the devil under Samuel's

mantle, or when it is a thought I never conceived before, and know not but it may be bad, as well as good; then, before I ſuffer it to ſettle upon my ſpirits, I muſt examine as well as I can, whether it be ſent from heaven or hell, and what meſſage it comes about, and what will be the iſſue of it. And thus, by the Divine aſſiſtance, I ſhall let nothing into my heart, but what will bring me nearer to my God, and ſet me at a greater diſtance from the evil and puniſhment of ſin. Neither do I think it my duty only to be ſo watchful againſt ſuch thoughts as are in themſelves ſinful; but,

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to be as fearful to let in vain, as careful to keep out ſinful, Thoughts.*

I DO not look upon vain thoughts as only tending to ſin, but as in themſelves ſinful; for that which makes ſin to be ſin, is the want of conformity to the will of God; and that vain thoughts are not conformable and agreeable to the Divine will, appears, in that God himſelf, by the mouth of his royal prophet, expreſly ſaith, *I hate vain thoughts*, Pſ. cxix. 113. Again, vain thoughts are therefore ſinful, becauſe they have in them nothing that can denominate them good: For, as in a moral ſenſe, there is never a particular individual act, ſo neither is there any particular thought, but what is either good or bad, in ſome reſpect or other. There is not a moment of my life, but it is my duty either to be thinking, or ſpeaking, or doing good: So that whenſoever I am not thus employed, I come ſhort of my duty, and by conſequence, am guilty of ſin.

But what are theſe vain thoughts, I am thus reſolving againſt? Why all wanderings and diſtraction, in prayer, or hearing the word of God; all uſeleſs, trifling, and impertinent thoughts, that do not belong to, nor further, the work I am about, the grand affair of my ſalvation; may properly be called vain thoughts. And alas! What ſwarms of theſe are continually crowding into my heart? How have I thought away whole hours together, about I know not what chimeras, whereof one ſcarce ever depends upon another: Sometimes entertaining myſelf with the pleaſure of ſenſe, as eating and drinking, and ſuch-like earthly enjoyments; ſometimes building caſtles in the air, and clambering up to the pinacle

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to ſtop every Thought, at its firſt entering into my Heart, and to examine it whence it comes, and whither it tends.*

SO ſoon as ever any new thought begins to bubble in my ſoul, I am reſolved to examine what ſtamp it is of, whether it ſprings from the pure fountain of living waters, or the polluted ſtreams of my own affections; as alſo, which way it tends, or takes its courſe, towards the ocean of happineſs, or pit of deſtruction. And the reaſon of this my reſolution, I draw from the experience I have had of the devil's temptations, and the working of my own corruptions; by which I find, that there is no ſin I am betrayed into, but what takes its riſe from my inward thoughts. Theſe are the tempters that firſt preſent ſome pleaſing object to my view, and then biaſs my underſtanding, and prevent my will, to comply with the ſuggeſtion. So that, tho' the ſpirit of God is pleaſed to dart a beam into my heart at the ſame time, and ſhew me the odious and dangerous effects of ſuch thoughts; yet I know not how or why, I find a prevailing ſuggeſtion within, that tells me, it is but a thought, and that ſo long as it goes no farther, it cannot do me much hurt. Under this ſpecious colour and pretence, I ſecretly perſuade myſelf to dwell a little longer upon it; and finding my heart pleaſed and delighted with its natural iſſue, I give it a little farther indulgence, till, at laſt, my deſire breaks out into a flame, and will be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the enjoyment of the object it is exerciſed upon. And what water can quench ſuch a raging fire, as is thus kindled by the devil, and blown up by the bellows of my own inordinate affections, which the more I think of, the more I encreaſe the flame? How nearly therefore does it concern me to take up this reſolution, of ſetting a conſtant watch and guard at the door of my heart, that nothing may enter in, without a ſtrict examination? Not as if I could examine every particular thought that ariſes in my heart, for by that means I could do nothing elſe but examine my thoughts without intermiſſion. But this I muſt do: Whenſoever I find any thought that bears the face or appearance of ſin, I muſt throw it aſide with the utmoſt abhorrence: And when it comes in diſguiſe, as the devil under Samuel's

mantle, or when it is a thought I never conceived before, and know not but it may be bad, as well as good; then, before I ſuffer it to ſettle upon my ſpirits, I muſt examine as well as I can, whether it be ſent from heaven or hell, and what meſſage it comes about, and what will be the iſſue of it. And thus, by the Divine aſſiſtance, I ſhall let nothing into my heart, but what will bring me nearer to my God, and ſet me at a greater diſtance from the evil and puniſhment of ſin. Neither do I think it my duty only to be ſo watchful againſt ſuch thoughts as are in themſelves ſinful; but,

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to be as fearful to let in vain, as careful to keep out ſinful, Thoughts.*

I DO not look upon vain thoughts as only tending to ſin, but as in themſelves ſinful; for that which makes ſin to be ſin, is the want of conformity to the will of God; and that vain thoughts are not conformable and agreeable to the Divine will, appears, in that God himſelf, by the mouth of his royal prophet, expreſly ſaith, *I hate vain thoughts*, Pſ. cxix. 113. Again, vain thoughts are therefore ſinful, becauſe they have in them nothing that can denominate them good: For, as in a moral ſenſe, there is never a particular individual act, ſo neither is there any particular thought, but what is either good or bad, in ſome reſpect or other. There is not a moment of my life, but it is my duty either to be thinking, or ſpeaking, or doing good: So that whenſoever I am not thus employed, I come ſhort of my duty, and by conſequence, am guilty of ſin.

But what are theſe vain thoughts, I am thus reſolving againſt? Why all wanderings and diſtraction, in prayer, or hearing the word of God; all uſeleſs, trifling, and impertinent thoughts, that do not belong to, nor further, the work I am about, the grand affair of my ſalvation; may properly be called vain thoughts. And alas! What ſwarms of theſe are continually crowding into my heart? How have I thought away whole hours together, about I know not what chimeras, whereof one ſcarce ever depends upon another: Sometimes entertaining myſelf with the pleaſure of ſenſe, as eating and drinking, and ſuch-like earthly enjoyments; ſometimes building caſtles in the air, and clambering up to the pinacle

of wealth and honour, which I am not half way got up to, but down I fall again into a fool's paradiſe?

Or, if I chance, at any time, to think a good while upon one thing, it is juſt to as much purpoſe as the man's thoughts were, which I have ſometimes heard of, and ſmiled at, who having an egg in his hand, by a ſort of chimerical climax, improved it into an eſtate; but while he was thus pleaſing himſelf with theſe imaginary products, down drops the egg, and all his hens, and cattle, and houſe, and lands, that he had raiſed from it, vaniſhed in the fall. Theſe, and ſuch-like, are vain thoughts, that I muſt, for the future, endeavour to avoid; and tho' it will be impoſſible for me wholly to prevent their firſt entering into my mind, yet I reſolve, by the grace of God, not to harbour or dwell upon, or delight myſelf with them. And then notwithſtanding they are, in ſome ſenſe, ſinful, yet they will not be imputed to me as ſuch, provided I uſe my utmoſt endeavours to avoid them. Which that I may be the better able to do,

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to be always exerciſing my Thoughts upon good Objects, that the Devil may not exerciſe them upon bad.*

THE ſoul being a ſpiritual ſubſtance, is always in action, and its proper and immediate act is Thinking, which is as natural and proper to the ſoul, as extenſion is to the body: It is that upon which all the other actings of the ſoul are grounded; ſo that neither our apprehenſions of, nor affections to, any object can be acted without it. And hence it is, that I think the ſoul is very properly defined, *Subſtantia cogitans*, a thinking ſubſtance; for there is nothing elſe but a ſpirit can think, and there is no ſpirit but always doth think. And think I find by experience, to be ſo true and certain, that if at any time I have endeavoured to think of nothing (as I have oftentimes done) I have ſpent all the time in thinking upon that very thought.

How much, therefore, doth it concern me to keep my ſoul in continual exerciſe upon what is good; for be ſure, if I do not ſet it on work, the devil will; and if it do not work for God, it will work for him; I know ſinful objects are more agreeable to a ſinful ſoul; but I am ſure, holy thoughts are

more conformable to a Holy God. Why, therefore, ſhould I ſpend and revel out my thoughts upon that which will deſtroy my ſoul? No, no; I ſhall henceforth endeavour always to be employing my thoughts upon ſomething that is good: and, therefore, to have good ſubjects conſtantly at hand to think upon, as the attributes of God, the glory of heaven, the miſery of hell, the merits of CHRIST, the corruption of my nature, the ſinfulneſs of ſin, the beauty of holineſs, the vanity of the world, the immortality of the ſoul, and the like; and likewiſe to take occaſion, from the objects I meet or converſe with in the world, to make ſuch remarks and reflections, as may be for my advantage or improvement in my ſpiritual affairs. For, there is nothing in the world, though it be never ſo bad, but that I may exerciſe good thoughts upon: And my neglect in this kind has been the real occaſion of all thoſe vain thoughts that have hitherto poſſeſſed my ſoul. I have not kept them cloſe to their work, to think upon what is good, and therefore, they have run out into thoſe extravagancies, which, by the bleſſing of God, in the performance of theſe reſolutions, I ſhall endeavour to avoid.

It is, indeed, a ſingular advantage of that high and heavenly calling, in which the Moſt High, of his wiſdom and goodneſs, has been pleaſed to place me, that all the objects we converſe with, and all the ſubjects we exerciſe our thoughts upon, are either God and heaven, or ſomething relating to them. So that we need not go out of our common road to meet with this heavenly company, good thoughts. But then, I do not account every thought of God, or heaven, which only ſwims in my brain, to be a good and holy thought, unleſs it ſinks down into my heart and affections, *i. e.* unleſs to my meditations of God, and another world, I join a longing for him, a rejoicing in him, and a ſolacing myſelf in the hopes of a future enjoyment of him. Neither will this be any hindrance, but a furtherance to my ſtudies; for, as I know no divine truths as I ought, unleſs I know them practically and experimentally; ſo I never think I have any clear apprehenſions of God, till I find my affections are inflamed towards him; or that ever I underſtand any divine truth aright, till my heart be brought into ſubjection to it.

This reſolution, therefore, extends itſelf, not only to the ſubject matter of my thougths, but alſo to the quality of them, with regard to practice, that they may influence my life and converſation, that whether I ſpeak, or write, or

eat or drink, or whatſoever I do, I may ſtill ſeaſon all, even my commoneſt actions, with heavenly meditations; there being nothing I can ſet my hand to, but I may likewiſe ſet my heart a working upon it. Which accordingly I ſhall endeavour, by the bleſſing of God, to do. And, for the better ordering of my thoughts,

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, ſo to marſhal my Thoughts, that they may not juſtle out one anoeher, nor any of them prejudice the Buſineſs I am about.*

MY ſoul being by nature ſwift and nimble, and by corruption inordinate and irregular in its operations, I can never ſet myſelf to think upon one thing, but preſently another preſſes in, and another after that, and ſo on, till by thinking of ſo many things at once, I can think upon nothing to any purpoſe. And hence it is, that I throw away thouſands of thoughts each day for nothing, which, if well managed, might prove very profitable and advantageous to me. To prevent, therefore, this tumultuous, deſultory, and uſeleſs working of my thoughts, as I have already reſolved to fix my heart upon neceſſary, and uſeful and good objects, ſo to prevent my thoughts rolling from one thing to another, or leaping from the top of one to the height of another object, I muſt now endeavour to rank and digeſt them into order and method, that they may for the future be more ſteady and regular in their purſuits. I know the devil and my own corrupt nature will labour to break the ranks, and confound the order of them; what ſtratagem, therefore, ſhall I uſe to prevent this confuſion? I ſhall endeavour, by the grace of God, whenſoever I find any idle thoughts begin to friſk and rove out of the way, to call them in again, and ſet them to work upon one or other of thoſe objects before-mentioned, and to keep them, for ſome time, fixed and intent upon it; and, conſidering the relations and dependencies of one thing upon another, not to ſuffer any foreign ideas, ſuch, I mean, as are impertinent to the chain of thoughts I am upon, to juſtle them out, or divert my mind another way. No, not tho' they be otherwiſe good thoughts; for thoughts in themſelves good, when they croud in unſeaſonably, are ſometimes attended with very ill effects, by interrupting and preventing ſome good purpoſes and reſolutions, which might

prove more effectual for promoting God's glory, the good of others, and the comfort of our own ſouls.

Theſe, and ſuch-like, are the methods by which I deſign and reſolve to regulate my thoughts: And, ſince I can do nothing without the Divine aſſiſtance, I earneſtly beg of God to give me ſuch a meaſure of his grace, as may enable me effectually to put theſe reſolutions in practice, that I may not think and reſolve in vain.

## *Concerning my* AFFECTIONS.

BUT whilſt I am thus ranging my thoughts, I find ſomething of a paſſion or inclination within me, either drawing me to, or driving me from, every thing I think on; ſo that I cannot ſo much as think upon a thought, but it is either pleaſing or diſpleaſing to me, according to the agreeableneſs or diſagreeableneſs of the object it is placed upon, or to my natural affections. If it comes under the pleaſing dreſs and appearance of good, I readily chuſe and embrace it; if otherwiſe, I am as eagerly bent to refuſe and reject it. And theſe two acts of the will are naturally founded in thoſe two reigning paſſions of the ſoul, love and hatred, which I cannot but look upon as the grounds of all its other motions and affections. For what are thoſe other paſſions of deſire, hope, joy, and the like, but love in its ſeveral poſtures? and what elſe can we conceive of fear, grief, abhorrence, *&c.* but ſo many different expreſſions of hatred, according to the ſeveral circumſtances that the diſpleaſing object appears to be under. Doth my underſtanding repreſent any thing to my will, under the notion of good and pleaſant? My will is preſently taken and delighted with it, and ſo places its love upon it; and this love, if the object be preſent, inclines me to embrace it with joy; if abſent, it puts forth itſelf into deſire, if eaſy to be attained, it comforts itſelf with hope; if difficult, it arms itſelf with courage; if impoſſible, it boils up into anger; if obſtructed, it preſently falls down into deſpair.

On the other hand, Doth my underſtanding repreſent any object to my will, as evil, painful, or deformed? How doth it immediately ſhrink and gather up itſelf into a loathing and hatred of it! and this hatred, if the ungrateful object be preſent, puts on the mournful ſables of grief and ſorrow: if it

be at any diſtance from it, it boils up into deteſtation and abhorrence; if ready to fall upon it, it ſhakes for fear; if difficult to be prevented, it ſtrengthens itſelf with courage and magnanimity, either to conquer or undergo it. Theſe affections, therefore, being thus the conſtant attendants of my thoughts, it behoves me as much to look to thoſe, as to the other, eſpecially, when I conſider, that not only my thoughts, but even my actions too, are generally determined to good or bad, accordingly as they are influenced by them. That my affections, therefore, as well as my thoughts, may be duly regulated,

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, always to make my Affections ſubſervient to the Dictates of my Underſtanding, that my Reaſon may not follow, but guide my Affections.*

THE Affections, being of themſelves blind and inordinate, unleſs they are directed by reaſon and judgment, they either move towards a wrong object, or purſue the right a wrong way. And this judgment muſt be mature and deliberate, ſuch as ariſes from a clear apprehenſion of the nature of the object that affects me, and a thorough conſideration of the ſeveral circumſtances that attend it. And great care muſt be taken, that I do not impoſe upon myſelf by fancy and imagination, that I do not miſtake fancy for judgment, or the capricious humours of my roving imagination, for the ſolid dictates of a well-guided reaſon. For, my fancy is as wild as my affections: and, *if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.*

And alas! how oft am I deceived in this manner! If I do but fancy a thing good and lovely, how eager are my affections in the purſuit of it? If I do but fancy any thing evil and hurtful to me, how doth my heart preſently riſe up againſt it, or grieve or ſorrow for it? and this, I believe, hath been the occaſion of all the enormities and extravagancies I have been guilty of, thro' the whole courſe of my paſt life, diveſting me of my reaſonable faculties, as to the acts and exerciſes of them, and ſubjecting my ſoul to the powers of ſenſe, that I could not raiſe my affections above them. Thus, for inſtance, I have not loved grace, becauſe my fancy could not ſee its beauty; I have

not loathed ſin, becauſe my fancy could not comprehend its miſery; and I have not truly deſired heaven, becauſe my fancy could not reach its glory: whereas, if the tranſient beauty and luſtre of this world's vanities was but preſented to my view, how has my fancy mounted up to the higheſt pitch of pleaſure and ambition, and inflamed my heart with the deſire of them?

And thus, poor wretch, have I been carried about with the powerful charms of ſenſe, without having any other guide of my affections, but what is common to the very brutes that periſh: fancy ſupplying that place in the ſenſitive, which reaſon does in the rational, ſoul. And, alas! What is this, but, with Nebuchadnezzar, to leave communion with men, and herd myſelf with the flocks of the beaſts of the field? And what a ſhame and reproach is this to the image of God, in which I was created?

Oh! Thou, that art the author of my nature, help me, I beſeech thee, to act more conformably to it, for the time to come; that I may no longer be bewildered or miſled by the blind conduct of my ſtraggling fancy; this *ignis fatuus*, that hurries me over bogs and precipices to the pit of deſtruction, but that I may bring all my affections and actions to the ſtandard of a ſound and clear judgment; and let that judgment be guided by the unerring light of thy Divine word: that ſo I may neither love, deſire, fear, nor deteſt any thing, but what my judgment, thus formed, tells me I ought to do.

I know it will be very hard thus to ſubdue my affections to the dictates and commands of my judgment: But howſoever, it is my reſolution, this morning, in the preſence of Almighty God, to endeavour it, and never to ſuffer my heart to ſettle its affections upon any object, till my judgment hath paſſed its ſentence upon it. And, as I will not ſuffer my affections to run before my judgment; ſo whenever that is determined, I ſtedfaſtly reſolve to follow it: that ſo, my apprehenſions and affections always going together, I may be ſure to walk in the direct path of God's commandments, and enter the gate that leads to everlaſting life. And, the better to facilitate the performance of this general reſolution, it being neceſſary to deſcend to particulars;

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to love GOD, as the beſt of Goods, and to hate Sin, as the worſt of Evils.*

AS God is the center of our concupiſcible affections, ſo ſin is the object of thoſe we call iraſcible; and the affections of love and hatred being the ground of all the reſt, I muſt have a great care that I do not miſtake or miſcarry in them: For if theſe be placed upon wrong objects, it is impoſſible any of the reſt ſhould be placed upon right ones. In order, therefore, to prevent ſuch a miſcarriage, as God is the greateſt good, and ſin the greateſt evil, I reſolve to love God above all things elſe in the world, and to hate ſin to the ſame degree; and ſo to love other things, only in relation to God, and to hate nothing, but in reference to ſin.

As for the firſt, the loving God above all things, there is nothing ſeems more reaſonable, inaſmuch as there is nothing lovely in any creature, but what it receives from God; and by how much the more it is like to God, by ſo much the more it is lovely unto us. Hence it is that beauty, or an exact ſymmetry and proportion of parts and colours, ſo attracts our love, becauſe it ſo much reſembles God, who is Beauty and Perfection itſelf. And hence it is likewiſe, that grace is the moſt lovely thing in the world, next to God, as being the image of God himſelf ſtamped upon the ſoul; nay, it is not only the image and repreſentation, but it is the influence and communication of himſelf to us; ſo that the more we have of grace, we may ſafely ſay, ſo much the more we have of God within us. Why, therefore, ſhould I grudge my love to Him, who only deſerves it? who is not only infinitely lovely in Himſelf, but the author and perfection of all lovelineſs in his creatures? why, the true reaſon is, that my affections have run a gadding without my judgment, or elſe my judgment hath been baulked or anticipated by my fancy; whereas, now, that my apprehenſions of God are a little cleared up, and my judgment leads the way, tho' no-body ſees me, yet methinks I cannot but bluſh at myſelf, that I ſhould ever lie doating upon theſe dreams and ſhadows here below, and not fix my affections upon the infinite beauty and all-ſufficiency of God above, who deſerves my love and admiration ſo infinitely beyond them. However, therefore, I have here-

tofore placed my affections upon other things above God, I am now reſolved to love God, not only above many, or moſt things, but above all things elſe in the world.

And here, by loving God, I do not underſtand that ſenſitive affection I place upon material objects; for it is impoſſible, that That ſhould be fixed upon God, who is a pure ſpiritual Being; but that, as by the deliberate choice of my will I take him for my chiefeſt good, ſo I ought to prefer him as ſuch, before my neareſt and deareſt poſſeſſions, intereſts, or relations, and whatſoever elſe may at any time ſtand in competition with him.

And thus, as I ſhall endeavour to love God, ſo likewiſe to hate ſin, above all things: And this is as neceſſary as the former; for all things have ſomething of good in them, as they are made by God; but ſin being, in its own nature, a privation of good, and directly oppoſite to the Nature and Will of God (as I have before ſhewed) it has nothing of beauty or amiableneſs to recommend it to my affections. On the contrary, it is a compound of deformity and defilement, that is always attended with puniſhment and miſery: and muſt, therefore, be the object of my hatred and abhorrence, whereſoever I find it. For, as God is the center of all that is good, ſo is ſin the fountain of all the evil in the world. All the ſtrife and contention, ignominy and diſgrace, misfortunes and afflictions that I obſerve in the world; all the diſeaſes of my body, and infirmities of my mind; all the errors of my underſtanding, and irregularities of my will and affections; in a word, all the evils whatſoever, that I am affected with, or ſubject to, in this world, are ſtill the fruits and effects of ſin: For if man had never offended the chiefeſt good, he had never been ſubject to this train of evils which attended his tranſgreſſion. Whenſoever, therefore, I find myſelf begin to deteſt and abhor any evil, I ſhall, for the future, endeavour to turn my eyes to the ſpring-head, and loath and deteſt the fountain that ſends forth all thoſe bitter and unwholeſome ſtreams as well as the channels of thoſe corrupt hearts in which they flow. And for this reaſon I reſolve to hate ſin whereſoever I find it, whether in myſelf or in others, in the beſt of friends, as well as the worſt of enemies. Love, I know, and charity, *covers a multitude of ſins*, and where we love the man, we are all of us but too apt to over-look, or excuſe his faults. For the prevention of this, therefore, I firmly reſolve, in all my expreſſions of love to my fel-

low-creatures, ſo to love the perſon, as yet to hate his ſins; and ſo to hate his ſins, as yet to love his perſon. The laſt of which, I hope, I ſhall not find hard to practiſe, my nature, by the bleſſing of God, being not eaſily inclined to hate any man's perſon whatſoever; and the former will not be much more difficult, when I conſider, that by how much more I love my friend, by ſo much more ſhould I hate whatſoever will be offenſive or deſtructive to him.

Having thus fixed my reſolutions with regard to thoſe two commanding paſſions of my ſoul, love and hatred;

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, to make GOD the principal Object of my Joy, and Sin the principal Object of my Grief and Sorrow; ſo as to grieve for Sin more than ſuffering, and for ſuffering only for Sin's Sake.*

THE affections of joy and grief are the immediate iſſues of love and hatred, and, therefore, not at all to be ſeparated in their object. Having, therefore, reſolved to love, I cannot but reſolve likewiſe to rejoice in God above all things; for the ſame meaſure of love I have towards any thing, the ſame meaſure of complacency and delight I muſt neceſſarily have in the enjoyment of it. As, therefore, I love God above all things, and other things only in ſubſerviency to him, ſo much I rejoice in God above all things, and in other things only as coming from him. I know, I not only may, but muſt rejoice, in the mercies and bleſſings that God confers upon me; but it is ſtill my duty ſtill to rejoice more in what God is in himſelf, than in what he is pleaſed to communicate to me: So that I am not only bound to rejoice in God, when I have nothing elſe, but when I have all things elſe to rejoice in. Let therefore my riches, honours, or my friends fail me: Let my pleaſures, my health and hope, and all fail me; I am ſtill reſolved, by his grace, to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of my ſalvation. On the other hand, let honour or riches be multiplied upon me; let joy and pleaſure, and all that a carnal heart (like mine) can wiſh for or deſire, be thrown upon me; yet am I ſtill reſolved, that as it is my buſineſs to ſerve God, ſo ſhall it be my delight and comfort to rejoice in him.

And, as God ſhall be my chiefeſt joy, ſo ſhall ſin be my greateſt grief; for I account no condition miſerable, but that which reſults from, or leads me unto ſin: So that when any thing befals me, which may bear the face of ſuffering, and fill my heart with ſorrow, I ſhall ſtill endeavour to keep off the ſmart till I know from whence it comes. If ſin has kindled the fire of God's wrath againſt me, and brought theſe judgments upon me, Oh! what a heavy load ſhall I then feel upon my ſoul? and how ſhall I groan and complain under the burden of it: But if there be nothing of the poiſon of ſin dropt into this cup of ſorrows, tho' it may perhaps prove bitter to my ſenſes, yet it will, in the end, prove healthful to my ſoul, as being not kindled at the furnace of God's wrath, but at the flames of his love and affection for me. So that I am ſo far from having cauſe to be ſorry for the ſufferings he brings upon me, that I have much greater cauſe to rejoice in them, as being an argument of the love and affection he bears to me; *For whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth*, Heb. xii. 6.

And having thus reſolved to rejoice in nothing but God, and grieve for nothing but ſin, I muſt not be caſt down and dejected at every providence which the men here below account a loſs or affliction; for, certainly, all the miſery I find in any thing extrinſical, is created by myſelf; nothing but what is in me being properly an affliction to me; ſo that it is my fancy that is the ground of miſery in all things without myſelf. If I did not fancy ſome evil or miſery in the loſs of ſuch an enjoyment, it would be no miſery at all to me, becauſe I am ſtill the ſame as I was, and have ſtill as much as I had before. For it is God that is the portion of my ſoul; and, therefore, ſhould I loſe every thing I have in the world beſides, yet having God, I cannot be ſaid to loſe any thing, becauſe I have Him that hath, and is, all things in himſelf. Whenſoever, therefore, any thing befals me, that uſes to be matter of ſorrow and dejection to me, I muſt not preſently be affected with or dejected at it, but ſtill behave myſelf like an heir of heaven, and living above the ſmiles and frowns of this world, account nothing matter of joy, but ſo far as I enjoy of God's love; nor any thing matter of ſorrow, but ſo much as I ſee of his anger in it.

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to deſire Spiritual Mercies more than Temporal; and Temporal Mercies only in reference to Spiritual.*

HAVING rectified the balance of my judgment according to the ſcripture; when I would begin to weigh temporal things with ſpiritual, I find there is no proportion, and ſo no compariſon to be made betwixt them. And will any wiſe man, then, that pretends to reaſon, be at a ſtand which of theſe to chuſe, which to eſteem the beſt, or deſire moſt? Alas! what is there in the world, that can fill the vaſt deſires of my ſoul, but only he, who is infinitely above me and my deſires too? Will riches do it? No, I may as ſoon undertake to fill my barns with grace, as my heart with gold, and as eaſily ſtuff my bags with virtue, as ever ſatisfy my deſires with wealth. Do I hunt after pleaſures? Theſe may, indeed, charm and delight my brutiſh ſenſes, but can never be agreeable. or proportionate to my ſpiritual faculties. Do I graſp at honour and popularity? Theſe, again, are as empty and unſatisfying as the former? they may make me look high and great in the eye of the world, turn my head giddy with applauſe, or puff up my heart with pride, but they can never fill up the meaſure of its deſires. And thus, if I ſhould have the whole world at command, and could, with Alexander, wield both ſword and ſceptre over all the nations and languages of it, would this content me? or rather, ſhould I not ſit down, and weep with him, that I had not another world to conquer and poſſeſs? Whereas, God being an infinite good, it is impoſſible for me to deſire any thing, which I may not enjoy in him and his mercies: Let me, or any other creature, extend our deſires never ſo far, ſtill the graces and bleſſings of this infinite God will be infinitely beyond them all: Inſomuch that tho' ten thouſand worlds are not able to ſatisfy one ſoul, yet one God is able to ſatisfy ten thouſand ſouls; yea, and ten millions more to them, as well as if there was only one ſoul in all the world to ſatisfy.

Come, therefore, my dear Lord and Saviour! whilſt thy ſervant is breathing after thee; and poſſeſs my heart with the ſpiritual bleſſings of grace and faith, peace and charity; and let none of theſe empty and tranſient delights of this world ſtand in competition with them! Thou art the ſource and

center of all my wiſhes and deſires; *even as the hart panteth after the water-brook; ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God!* When ſhall I appear in thy preſence? When, when ſhall that bleſſed time come, that I ſhall ſee thy ſacred majeſty, face to face? This is a mercy, I confeſs, which I cannot expect, whilſt impriſoned in the body; but, howſoever, though I muſt not yet appear before thee, do thou vouchſafe to appear in me, and give me ſuch glympſes of thy love and graces here, as may be an earneſt of the bliſs and glory I am to enjoy hereafter.

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to hope for nothing ſo much as the Promiſes, and to fear nothing ſo much as the Threatenings, of GOD.*

MY ſoul being inflamed with holy deſires after God, my heart cannot but be big with the hopes and expectations of him: And, truly, as there is nothing that I can abſolutely deſire, ſo neither is there any thing that I can aſſuredly hope for and depend upon but God himſelf, and the promiſes he has made to me in his divine word. For, as all things derive their being and ſubſiſtence from him, ſo they are all at his beck and command, and are acted and influenced as his wiſdom and pleaſure ſees fit to order them. All the ſecondary cauſes are in his hand, and he turns them which way ſoever he will; ſo that, howſoever improbable and diſproportionate the means he uſes may appear to be, he never fails to accompliſh the end, or whatever he wills or decrees to be done. And, therefore, where-ever I meet with any promiſes made over to the faithful in his ſacred word (ſince they are the promiſes of one who is infinitely juſt and true, who can neither diſſemble nor deceive) I cannot in the leaſt doubt but they will be punctually fulfilled; and if I am of that happy number (as I truſt through the merits of CHRIST, and my own ſincere endeavours, I ſhall approve myſelf to be) I have as much aſſurance of being partaker of them, as if I had them actually in poſſeſſion, or as any of the faithful ſervants of God, who have already experienced the accompliſhment of them.

But ſuppoſe God ſhould not favour me with the bright part of his promiſes, but, inſtead of the bleſſings of health

and proſperity, ſhould viſit me with croſſes and afflictions; yet I have ſtill the ſame grounds for my hope and confidence in him, and may ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what the devil or man can do unto me.* For, though their ſpite and malice may ſometimes croſs, torment, afflict, and perſecute me; yet, ſince I am aſſured, they are only as inſtruments in the hand of God, that cannot go beyond their commiſſion, nor make me ſuffer more than I am able to bear, I may comfort myſelf, under all theſe afflictions, by the ſame divine promiſe that St. Paul had recourſe to, on the like occaſion, to wit, *That all ſhall work together for good, to them that love GOD, who are the called according to his purpoſe,* Rom. viii. 28. The devil could not touch the poſſeſſions of Job, till he had received a commiſſion from God; nor could he come near his body till that commiſſion was renewed; and ſo, neither can he, nor any creature whatſoever, throw any evil upon me, without the Divine permiſſion; and even that, tho' it ſeems to be evil, ſhall really, in the end, turn to my benefit and advantage. Oh! what a ſovereign antidote is this againſt all deſpondency and deſpair, even under the deepeſt and ſevereſt trials? Permit me, O my God, to apply this ſacred promiſe to myſelf, and ſay, I am aſſured of it by my own experience. For I can hardly remember any one thing that ever happened to me, in the whole courſe of my life, even to the croſſing of my moſt earneſt deſires, and higheſt expectations, but what I muſt confeſs, to the praiſe of thy grace and goodneſs, has really, in the end, turned to my advantage another way: Oh! make me truly ſenſible of all thy promiſes to, and dealings with me, that whatever ſtorms and ſurges may ariſe, in the tempeſtuous ocean of this tranſient world, I may ſtill fix the anchor of my hope and happineſs in thee, who art the ſource and ſpring of all bleſſings, and without whom no evil or calamity could ever befal me!

And as the promiſes of God, upon all theſe accounts, are to be the object of my hope; ſo are his threatenings to be of my fear and averſion; as the former are of excellent uſe to raiſe and revive the moſt drooping hearts, ſo the latter are of weight enough to ſink and depreſs the ſtouteſt and moſt undaunted ſpirits, and make them lick up the duſt of horror and deſpair Not to mention any thing of the exquiſite and eternal miſeries denounced againſt the wicked in the next

world, with which the ſcriptures every-where abound, there is one puniſhment threatened to be inflicted here, which is, of itſelf, ſufficient to do this; and that is, in *Mal.* ii. 2. *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and curſe your bleſſings.* Moſt dreadful ſentence! which none, that conſider aright, can be able to read without trembling and aſtoniſhment. Alas! if God ſhould curſe me, where ſhould I ſeek for bleſſing, ſince He is the only fountain from which it flows, and by which it is conveyed and communicated to me? And if he ſhould curſe my very bleſſings, what could I hope for but miſery and deſpair? my health, my wealth, my preferments, my relations, nay, my very life itſelf, would all be accurſed to me; and, what is yet worſe, even my ſpiritual exerciſes and performances, upon which I chiefly build my hopes of happineſs, my preaching, praying, and communicating, would all become a ſnare and a curſe to me: Yea, and CHRIST himſelf, who came into the world to bleſs and redeem me, if I walk not in his fear, believe not his goſpel, or give not glory to his name, will himſelf be a curſe and condemnation to me. So that I may ſay of every thing I have, or enjoy, or expect, All theſe God has made curſes to me, becauſe I have not bleſſed and glorified him in them. Oh! who would not tremble and be wrought upon by theſe threatenings? who would not fear thee, O King of nations, who art thus terrible in thy Judgments? who would not love and obey thee, who art ſo gracious in thy Promiſes? Teach me, I beſeech thee, ſo to place my fear upon the former, that I may ſtill fix my hope upon the latter, that though I fear thy dreadful curſes, yet I may never deſpair of thy tender mercies!

## RESOLUTION VI.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to arm myſelf with that ſpiritual Courage and Magnanimity, as to preſs through all Duties and Difficulties whatſoever, for the Advancement of GOD's Glory, and my own Happineſs.*

CHRISTIANITY is well termed a warfare, for a warfare it is, wherein no danger can be prevented, no enemy conquered, no victory obtained, without much courage and reſolution. I have not only many outward enemies to grap-

ple with, but I have myſelf, my worſt enemy, to encounter and ſubdue. As for thoſe enemies which are not near me, by the aſſiſtance of God's ſpirit, I can make pretty good ſhift to keep them at the ſword's point: But this enemy, that is gotten within me, has ſo often foiled and diſarmed me, that I have reaſon to ſay, as David did of his enemies, *It is too ſtrong for me*; and, as he ſaid of the chief of his, *I ſhall one day fall by the hands of Saul:* So I have too much occaſion to ſay, I ſhall fall by myſelf, as being myſelf the greateſt enemy to my own ſpiritual intereſt and concerns. How neceſſary is it, then, that I ſhould raiſe and muſter up all my force and courage, put on my ſpiritual armour, and make myſelf ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? I know I muſt ſtrive, before I can enter in at the ſtrait gate; I muſt win the crown, before I can wear it, and be a member of the Church Militant, before I can be admitted into the Church Triumphant. In a word, I muſt go thro' a ſolitary wilderneſs, and conquer many enemies, before I come to the land of Canaan; or elſe I muſt never be poſſeſſed of it. What then? Shall I loſe my glory, to baulk my duty? Shall I let go my glorious and eternal poſſeſſion, to ſave myſelf from a ſeeming hardſhip, which the devil would perſuade me to be a trouble and affliction? Alas! if CHRIST had laid aſide the great work of my redemption, to avoid the undergoing of GOD's anger and man's malice, what a miſerable condition had I been in? And, therefore, whatever taunts and reproaches I meet with from the preſumptuous and prophane, the infidel and atheiſtical reprobates of the age; let them laugh at my profeſſion, or mock at what they are pleaſed to call preciſeneſs; let them defraud me of my juſt rights, or traduce and bereave me of my good name and reputation; let them vent the utmoſt of their poiſonous malice and envy againſt me; I have this comfortable reflection ſtill to ſupport me, That if I ſuffer all this for CHRIST's ſake, 'tis in the cauſe of one who ſuffered a thouſand times more for mine; and, therefore, it ought to be matter of joy and triumph, rather than of grief and dejection to me: Eſpecially, conſidering *that theſe my light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Upon the proſpect of which, I firmly reſolve, notwithſtanding the growing ſtrength of ſin, and the overbearing prevalency of my own corrupt affections, to undertake all duties, and undergo all miſeries, that God in his infinite wiſdom, thinks fit to lay upon me, or exerciſe my patience in.

## RESOLUTION VII.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of* GOD, *ſo to be angry, as not to ſin; and, therefore, to be angry at nothing but Sin.*

THE *former* part of the *reſolution* is founded in the expreſs command of St. Paul, *Be ye angry, and ſin not*, Eph. iv. 26. And the latter is an *explication* of, as well as an *inference* drawn from it. For, if anger be not only lawful, but a duty, as is here ſuppoſed, when it does not involve us in ſin; the only difficulty is, to know how that paſſion ought to be qualified, to juſtify the exerciſe of it without being guilty of ſin: And the circumſtances or qualifications required for this, are firſt, That it be placed upon a due object; and, ſecondly, That it do not exceed its proper bounds.

Now, as nothing can deſerve my anger, but what is diſagreeable to my nature, and offenſive to the author of it, ſo nothing but ſin can properly be called its object. The chief thing that I am to aim at in my actions, is the honouring, ſerving and pleaſing of God, and how can I ſerve and pleaſe God, in being angry at any thing but what I know is diſpleaſing to him? I may be ſcorned, reproached, and vilified among my equals, or accuſed, condemned, and puniſhed by my ſuperiors; and theſe are treatments that are but too apt to raiſe and tranſport men into anger and revenge: But then, before I ſuffer this paſſion to boil up in me, I ought to conſider whether I have not behaved myſelf ſo as to deſerve this ſort of treatment; if I have, then there is no injury or injuſtice done me thereby, and, therefore, I ought not to be angry at it: If I have not, I muſt not be angry at the perſons who act thus falſly and unjuſtly againſt me, but only at their ſin; for, to ſpeak properly, it is not the perſon that offends me, but the ſin. And this, not becauſe it is injurious to me, but becauſe it is offenſive and diſpleaſing to God Himſelf; for to be angry at any thing but what diſpleaſes God, is to diſpleaſe God in being angry. Whenever, therefore, I receive any affronts or provocations of this nature, I am reſolved, by God's grace aſſiſting my endeavours, never to be moved or troubled at them, farther than they are in their own nature ſinful, and at the ſame time abſtracting the ſin from the perſons, to pray for the pardon of thoſe that are guilty of it;

and not only ſo, but, according to the command and example of my Saviour, even to love them too.

But, how ſhall I be ſure to be angry at nothing but ſin, and ſo not to ſin in my anger, when every petty triſle or croſs accident is ſo apt to raiſe this paſſion in me? Why, the beſt method I can take, is, that which the wiſe man directs me to, *not to be haſty in my ſpirit*, Eccleſ. vii. 9. but *to defer my anger* according to *diſcretion*, Prov. xix. 11. So that, whenſoever any thing happens, that may incenſe and inflame my paſſion, I muſt immediately ſtop its career, and ſuſpend the acts of it, till I have duly conſidered the motives and occaſions that raiſed it. And as this will be a very good means to regulate the *object* of my anger, ſo likewiſe the *meaſure* of it: For, he that is ſlow to wrath, takes time to conſider, and, by conſequence, puts his paſſion under the conduct of his reaſon; and, whoever does ſo, it will never ſuffer it to be tranſported beyond its proper bounds: Whereas he whoſe anger is like tinder, that catches as ſoon as the ſpark is upon it, and who uſes no means to ſtop its ſpreading, is preſently blown up into a furious flame, which, before 'tis extinguiſhed, may do more miſchief than he is ever able to repair; for, no man knows whither his anger may hurry him, when once it has got the maſtery of him. In order, therefore, to prevent the fatal conſequences of this paſſion, I now reſolve never to ſpeak or do any thing, while I am under the influence of it, but take time to conſider with myſelf, and reflect upon the ſeveral circumſtances of the action or object it ariſes from, as well as the occaſion and tendency of it; and, as oft as I find any thing in it diſpleaſing to God, to be regularly angry at that, to correct, rebuke, and reprove it, with a zeal and fervour of ſpirit, ſuitable to the occaſion; but, ſtill to keep within the bounds of the truly Chriſtian temper, which is always diſtinguiſhed by love and charity, and exerciſes itſelf in meekneſs and moderation. And, Oh! what a ſedate and contented ſpirit will this *reſolution* breed in me! How eaſy and quiet ſhall I be under all circumſtances? Whilſt others are peeviſh and fretful, and torment themſelves with every petty triſle that does but croſs their inclinations, or ſeem to be injurious to them; or fall into the other extreme, of a *ſtoical apathy* or inſenſibility; I ſhall, by this *reſolution*, maintain a medium betwixt both, and *poſſeſs my ſoul in peace and patience*.

## *Concerning my* WORDS.

HAVING thus far cleanſed the fountain of my heart, with regard to my thoughts and affections, which are the immediate iſſues of my active ſoul, the next thing incumbent upon me, is to regulate my outward converſation, both with reſpect to my words and actions. As to the firſt, the holy ſcripture aſſures me, that the tongue is *a world of iniquity*, James iii. 6. And again, that *it is an unruly evil, which no man can tame*, ver. 8. But is it, indeed, ſo unruly? Then there is the more occaſion to have it governed and ſubdued; and, ſince that is not to be done by man alone, it is ſtill more neceſſary, that I ſhould call in the aſſiſtance of that Divine Spirit that gives this character of it, firſt to fix my *reſolutions*, and then to ſtrengthen me in the performance of them. I ſtedfaſtly purpoſe to imitate the Royal Pſalmiſt in this particular, and *to take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue*, Pſa. xxxix. 1. Yea, I am reſolved, with holy Job, that *all the while my breath, and the Spirit of God, is in my noſtrils, my lips ſhall not ſpeak wickedneſs, nor my tongue utter deceit*, Job xxvii. 3, 4. But, ſince it is ſuch an unruly inſtrument, ſo very difficult to be bridled or reſtrained, Do Thou, O God, who firſt madeſt it, enable me to get the maſtery of it! *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips*, that, with St. Paul, *I may ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs*, and make this unruly evil a happy inſtrument of much good! Which that I may do,

### RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, never to ſpeak much leſs I often ſpeak too much, and not to ſpeak at all, rather than to no Purpoſe.*

IT is the *voice of fools that is known by the multitude of words*, Eccleſ. v. 3. In which there are *diverſe vanities*, ver. 6. and ſin too, *Prov.* x. 19. whereas *he that refraineth his lips is wiſe*. This is that piece of Chriſtian wiſdom, which I am now reſolving to look after; and therefore never to deliver my words out to the world by number, but by

weight, not by quantity, but quality: not hiding any meaning under ambiguous terms and expreſſions, but fitting words exactly to expreſs my meaning; not amuſing thoſe I converſe with, with circles of impertinence and circumlocution, but coming directly to the matter by the ſtrait line of apt expreſſions, ſo as never to ſpeak more than the matter requireth; nor to ſpeak at all, when no matter requireth. For, why ſhould I ſpend my breath for nothing? Alas! that is not all; if I ſpend it ill, it will be far worſe, than ſpending it for nothing; for, our bleſſed Saviour has told me that I muſt anſwer *for every idle* and unprofitable as well as prophane word, *Matt.* xii. 36. But now, if the vain word, if all the vain words I ever ſpoke ſhould be written, as I have cauſe to believe they are, in the book of God's remembrance, how many vaſt volumes *muſt they make!* and if an index ſhould be made, where to find profitable, and where idle words, how few references would there be to the former? what multitudes to the latter? and (what is yet more terrifying) if all theſe words ſhould be brought in judgment againſt me at the laſt day, how would thoſe very words then make me ſpeechleſs? and what ſhame and confuſion of face would they then ſtrike me with? But I truſt, thro' the blood of my Redeemer, and the tears of my repentance, they will be all waſhed and blotted out, before I come to appear before him. In order to this, as I heartily bewail and deteſt my former follies in this reſpect; ſo I firmly purpoſe and reſolve to uſe my utmoſt endeavours for the time to come, not to give way any more to ſuch idle words and expreſſions, as are likely to be thus prejudicial to my eternal intereſt; but always to conſider well before-hand, what, and how, and why I ſpeak, and ſuffer no corrupt communication to *proceed out of my mouth, but that which is good, to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace to the hearers,* Eph. iv. 29.

I know there are ſome words, that are purely jocoſe, ſpoken with no other intent but only to promote mirth, and divert melancholy; and theſe words, ſo long as they are harmleſs and innocent, ſo long as they do not reflect diſhonour upon God, nor injure the character and reputation of my neighbour, are very lawful and allowable; inaſmuch as they conduce to the refreſhing and reviving of my ſpirits, and the preſervation of my health. But then, I muſt always take care ſo to wind and turn my diſcourſe, that what recreates me in ſpeaking, may profit others when ſpoke; that my

words may not only be ſuch as have no malignity in them, but ſuch as may be uſeful and beneficial; not only ſuch as do no hurt, but likewiſe ſuch as may do much good to others as well as myſelf. To this end, I firmly reſolve, by the grace of God, never to ſpeak only for the ſake of ſpeaking, but to weigh each word before I ſpeak it, and to conſider the conſequence and tendency of it, whether it may be really the occaſion of good or evil, or tend to the edifying or ſcandalizing of the perſon I ſpeak it to.

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, not only to avoid the Wickedneſs of ſwearing falſly, but likewiſe the very Appearance of ſwearing at all.*

PERJURY is a ſin condemned by the very laws of nature; inſomuch that I ſhould wrong my natural faculties, ſhould I give way to, or be guilty of it. For the ſame nature that tells me, the perſon of God is to be adored, tells me likewiſe his name is to be reverenced; and what more horrid impiety can poſſibly be imagined, than to proſtitute the moſt ſacred name of the moſt high God, to confirm the lyes of ſinful men? I know, ſwearing in a juſt matter, and right manner, may be as lawful under the New, as under the Old Teſtament; for thus I find St. Paul ſaying, *As God is true*, 2 Cor. i. 18. and ver. 23. *I call God for a record upon my ſoul*, wherein is contained the very nature of an oath, which is the calling God for a record and a witneſs to the truth of what we ſpeak: But when it is to maintain falſhood, which is to an ill purpoſe, or lightly and vain, which is to no purpoſe at all, it is a ſin of the higheſt aggravation, that ought, with the greateſt deteſtation and abhorrence, to be ſhunned and avoided. God ſaith, by *Moſes*, Lev. xix. 12. *Thou ſhalt not ſwear by my name falſly, neither ſhalt thou prophane the name of thy GOD: I am the LORD.* And Exod. xx. 7. Deut. v. 11. *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.* But farther God ſays, by CHRIST, *Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool*, &c. So that not only, By GOD, and by JESUS, are oaths, but ſwearing by any of God's creatures, is, in a manner, to ſwear by God himſelf: I ſwear by the heavens; can the heavens

hear, or witneſs what I ſay? No; it is the Glorious Majeſty that rules there, that I call upon to witneſs the truth of the words I ſpeak, and the ſinfulneſs of my heart for ſwearing to them. Do I ſwear by my faith? But how is that? Can faith teſtify what I ſay? No, it is only he that wrought this faith in my heart, can witneſs the truth of my words. And, if I ſwear by the gifts of God, I do in effect ſwear by God himſelf; otherwiſe, I aſcribe that to the creature, which is only compatible to the Glorious Creator, even the knowledge of the thoughts of my heart, how ſecret ſoever they be.

But, again, there is more in the third commandment, than the devil would perſuade the world there is: for, when God commands me *not to take his name in vain*, it is more than if he had commanded me not only to ſwear by it: For, I cannot perſuade myſelf, but that every time I ſpeak of God, when I do not think of him, I take his name in vain: and, therefore, I ought to endeavour to avoid even the mentioning of God, as well as ſwearing by him, unleſs upon urgent occaſions, and with reverence and reſpect becoming his Majeſty; for, queſtionleſs, *O Lord*, and *O God*, may be ſpoken as vainly, as, *By Lord*, and *By God*: And, therefore, I ought never to ſpeak ſuch words, without thinking really in my heart, what I ſpeak openly with my mouth, leſt my name be written amongſt thoſe that *take the name of God in vain*. But farther ſtill, I am reſolved not only to avoid downright ſwearing, but likewiſe the very appearance of it: So that what doth but look like an oath, ſhall be as odious to me, as what looks like nothing elſe.

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, always to make my Tongue and Heart go together, ſo as never to ſpeak with the one, what I do not think in the other.*

AS my happineſs conſiſteth in nearneſs and vicinity, ſo doth my holineſs in likeneſs and conformity to the chiefeſt good, I am ſo much the better, as I am the liker the beſt; and ſo much the holier, as I am more conformable to the holieſt, or rather to him who is holineſs itſelf. Now, one great title which the Moſt High is pleaſed to give himſelf, and by which he is pleaſed to reveal himſelf to us, is the God of truth: So

that I ſhall be ſo much the liker to the *God of truth*, by how much I am the more conſtant to the truth of God. And, the farther I deviate from this, the nearer I approach to the nature of the devil, who *is the father of lyes*, and lyars too, *John* viii. 44. And hence it is, that of all the ſins the men of faſhion are guilty of, they can leaſt endure to be charged with lying. To give a man the lye, or to ſay, *You lye*, is looked upon as the greateſt affront that can be put upon them. And why ſo? But only becauſe this ſin of lying makes them ſo like their father the devil, that a man had almoſt as well call them devils, as lyars; and therefore to avoid the ſcandal and reproach, as well as the dangerous malignity of this damnable ſin, I am reſolved, by the bleſſing of God, always to tune my tongue in uniſon to my heart, ſo as never to ſpeak any thing, but what I think really to be true. So that, if ever I ſpeak what is not true, it ſhall not be the error of my will, but of my underſtanding.

I know, lyes are commonly diſtinguiſhed into Officious, Pernicious, and Jocoſe: and ſome may fancy ſome of them more tolerable than others. But, for my own part, I think they are all pernicious, and therefore, not to be jeſted withal, nor indulged, upon any pretence or colour whatſoever. Not as if it was a ſin, not to ſpeak exactly as a thing is in itſelf, or as it ſeems to me in its literal meaning, without ſome liberty granted to rhetorical tropes and figures; [for, ſo the ſcripture itſelf would be chargeable with lyes; many things being contained in it, which are not true in a literal ſenſe:] But, I muſt ſo uſe rhetorical, as not to abuſe my Chriſtian liberty; and, therefore, never to make uſe of hyperboles, ironies, or other tropes and figures, to deceive or impoſe upon my auditors, but only for the better adorning, illuſtrating, or confirming the matter.

But, there is another ſort of lyes moſt men are apt to fall into, and they are promiſſory lyes; to avoid which, I am reſolved never to promiſe any thing with my mouth, but what I intend to perform in my heart; and never to intend to perform any thing, but what I am ſure I can perform. For, this is the cauſe and occaſion of moſt promiſſory lyes, that we promiſe that abſolutely, which we ſhould promiſe only conditionally. For, tho' I may intend to do as I ſay now, yet there are a thouſand weighty things may intervene, which may turn the balance of my intentions, or otherwiſe hinder the performance of my promiſe. So that, unleſs I be abſolutely ſure I can do a thing, I muſt never abſolutely promiſe

to do it; and, therefore, in all ſuch promiſes, ſhall ſtill put in *God willing*, or *by the help of God*, at the ſame time lifting up my heart to God, leſt I take his name in vain.

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to ſpeak of other Mens Sins only before their Faces, and of their Virtues only behind their Backs.*

TO commend men when they are preſent, I eſteem almoſt as great a piece of folly as to reprove them when they are abſent; tho' I do confeſs, in ſome caſes, and to ſome perſons, it may be commendable; eſpecially when the perſon is not apt to be puffed up, but ſpurred on by it. But to rail at others, when they hear me not, is the higheſt piece of folly imaginable; for, as it is impoſſible they ſhould get any good, ſo is it impoſſible but that I ſhould get much hurt by it. For, ſuch ſort of words, make the very beſt we can of them, are but idle and unprofitable, and may not only prove injurious to the perſon of whom, but even to whom they are ſpoken, by wounding the credit of the former, and the charity of the latter; and ſo, by conſequence, my own ſoul; nay, even tho' I ſpeak that which is true in itſelf, and known to be ſo to me: And, therefore, this way of backbiting ought by all means, to be avoided.

But, I muſt, much more, have a care of raiſing falſe reports concerning any one, or of giving credit to them that raiſe them, or of paſſing my judgment, till I have weighed the matter; leſt I tranſgreſs the rules of mercy and charity, which command me not to cenſure any one upon others rumours, or my own ſurmiſes; nay, if the thing be in itſelf true, ſtill to interpret it in the beſt ſenſe. But, if I muſt needs be raking in other mens ſores, it muſt not be behind their backs, but before their faces; for, the one is a great ſin, and the other may be as great a duty, even to reprove my neighbour for doing any thing offenſive unto God, or deſtructive to his own ſoul; ſtill endeavouring ſo to manage the reproof, as to make his ſin loathſome to him, and prevail upon him, if poſſible, to forſake it: But, there is a great deal of Chriſtian prudence and diſcretion to be uſed in this, leſt others may juſtly reprove me for my indiſcreet reproof of others. I muſt ſtill fit my reproof to the time when, the perſon to whom, and the ſin againſt which it is deſigned; ſtill contriving with my-

ſelf how to carry on this duty ſo, as that by *converting a ſinner from the evil of his ways, I may ſave my ſoul from death, and cover a multitude of ſins*, James v. 29. Not venting my anger againſt the perſon, but my ſorrow for the ſin that is reproved. Hot, paſſionate, and reviling words, will not ſo much exaſperate a man againſt his ſin that is reproved, as againſt the perſon that doth reprove it. It is *not the wrath of man that worketh the righteouſneſs of God*, James i. 10. But this, of all duties, muſt be performed with the ſpirit of love and meekneſs; I muſt firſt inſinuate myſelf into his affections, and then preſs his ſin upon his conſcience, and that directly or indirectly, as the perſon, matter, or occaſion ſhall require; that ſo he that is reproved by me now, may have cauſe to bleſs God for me to all eternity.

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, always to ſpeak reverently to my Superiors, humbly to my Inferiors, and civilly to all.*

THE moſt high God, the maſter of this great family, the world, for the more orderly government of it, hath, according to his infinite wiſdom, ſet ſome in higher, ſome in lower places, hath made ſome as ſtewards, others as under-ſervants; and according to every man's work that he expects from him, he meaſures out his talents to him. Bleſſed be his name for it, he hath ſet me in a middle form, giving me Agar's wiſh, ſubject neither to envy on one hand, nor pity on the other; ſo that I have both ſuperiors to reverence, and inferiors to condeſcend to. And accordingly, it is my duty ſo to behave myſelf towards them, that the reverent expreſſions of my mouth may manifeſt the obedient ſubjection of my heart to the power and authority God has given them over me. It is the expreſs command of the goſpel, that we ſhould render to every man his due, *Fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour belongeth*, Rom. xiii. 13. which words plainly imply, both that it is ſome mens due to receive honour, and other mens duty to give it. And accordingly, we find Paul, when he was brought before Feſtus, doth not ſay, *Art thou he, whom they call Feſtus?* or thou Feſtus, as the miſguided enthuſiaſts, in our days, would have ſaid; but, *Moſt noble Feſtus*, Acts xxvi. 25. In like manner St. John doth not call her he writes to, in his ſecond epiſtle, being a perſon

of quality, Woman, but, Elect lady. And this ſort of reverence is farther confirmed to us, not only by the conſtant cuſtom of all nations in all ages of the world, but it is likewiſe highly agreeable to the rules of right reaſon, as well as the order of government. For, as there is both a natural and civil ſuperiority, a ſuperiority in gifts and age, and a ſuperiority likewiſe in office and ſtation; ſo there is nothing can be more neceſſary, than that there ſhould be, in both theſe reſpects, a reverence and reſpect paid to the perſons of men, anſwerable to theſe diſtinctions. And therefore I cannot but condemn that rude and unmannerly behaviour of ſome of our modern ſchiſmatics towards their ſuperiors, as factious and unreaſonable, as well as repugnant to the dictates of the Divine Spirit, which the Prophets and Apoſtles were inſpired and influenced by.

And, as there is a reverence due from inferiors to ſuperioys in point of converſation, ſo likewiſe are there ſome decent regards and civilities to be ſhewed even by ſuperiors to their inferiors, who are always treated with candour and condeſcenſion, in their ordinary capacities; and even when they are conſidered as criminals, with meekneſs and moderation. Inſomuch that methinks, it is one of the worſt ſights in the world, to ſee ſome men that are gotten upon a little higher ground than their neighbours are, to look proudly and ſcornfully down upon all that are below them, diſdaining to vouchſafe them the leaſt favour or reſpect whatſoever. Such churliſh, haughty, and foul-mouthed Nabals as theſe, are not only very unjuſt, and unreaſonable in their behaviour to others, but they are certainly the greateſt enemies to themſelves, that they have in all the world beſides; not only by drawing upon them the hatred and enmity of all that are about them, but likewiſe by tormenting themſelves with ſuch frivolous things, as ſuch ſpirits commonly do. Wherefore, that I may pleaſe God, my neighbour, and myſelf, in what I ſpeak, tho' I could exceed other men (which is impoſſible for me to ſuppoſe) in every thing; I reſolve, by God's Grace, always to behave myſelf ſo, as if I excelled them in nothing: and not only to ſpeak reverently to them that are above me, but humbly and civilly to thoſe that are beneath me too. I will always endeavour to uſe ſuch humble and winning words, as to manifeſt more of my love to them than my power over them: I will always ſeaſon my tongue with ſavoury, not bitter expreſſions, not making my mouth a vent

for my fury and paſſion to fume out at, but rather an inſtrument to draw others love and affection in by; ſtill ſpeaking as civilly unto others, as I would have them ſpeak civilly to me.

## *Concerning my* ACTIONS.

THE other way of my ſoul's putting forth, and ſhewing herſelf to the world, is by her actions, which it concerns me as much to look to and regulate, as my words; foraſmuch as there is not the leaſt ill circumſtance in any action, but what, unleſs it be repented of, muſt be brought into queſtion, and anſwered for, at the Laſt Day: For, tho' an action cannot be denominated good, unleſs it be good in all circumſtances and reſpects; yet it is always denominated bad, if it is bad only in one. As it is in muſic, if but one ſtring jar, or be out of tune, the whole harmony is ſpoiled; ſo here, if but one circumſtance in an action be wanting or defective, the whole action is thereby rendered immoral.

How much, therefore, doth it behove me to keep a ſtrict watch over myſelf, and ſo to perform every action, and place every circumſtance in it, that it may have its approbation in the court of heaven? Well, I am reſolved, by the grace of God, to try what I can do. I know it is impoſſible for me to reſolve upon particular actions: but howſoever I ſhall reſolve upon ſuch general rules, the application of which to particular acts may make them pleaſing and acceptable in the ſight of God; always premiſing this which I have reſolved upon before, as the beſt foundation, *viz.* to ſquare all my actions by the ſcripture rule, and to do nothing but what I have, ſome way or other, a warrant from the word of God. Upon this fixed and ſteady principle,

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to do every thing in Obedience to the Will of GOD.*

IT is not ſufficient, that what I do is the will of God, but I muſt therefore do it becauſe it is the will of God. For, what ſaith my Father, *My Son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes obſerve my ways*, Prov. xxiii. 26. So that my Father will not only have my hand, but my heart too. And my feet muſt not walk in the ways of God, till my eyes have obſerved and diſcerned them to be ſo. I may do an action that is in itſelf good; and yet, at the ſame time, not do a good action, if I do not therefore do it, becauſe it is ſo: *for example*, I may give an alms to the poor, feed the hungry, or cloath the naked; but let me examine and conſider well, upon what principle theſe actions are founded, whether I therefore do them, becauſe God hath commanded them; if not, my feeding the poor will be no more a good action, than the *ravens feeding the prophet* was, 1 Kings xvii. 6. Their feeding of the prophet was commanded by God, as well as my feeding of the poor, but I cannot ſay they did a good action, becauſe tho' they did do this, which was commanded by God, yet being irrational creatures, they could not reflect upon that command, and ſo could not do this in obedience to it.

There are ſome perſons, to the very frame and diſpoſition of whoſe ſpirits ſome ſins are, in their nature, odious and abominable. Thus I have known ſome, whoſe very conſtitutions have carried them into an antipathy to luſt and luxury; and others again, who could never endure to drink beyond their thirſt, much leſs to unman and bebeaſt themſelves, by drinking to exceſs. And the like may be obſerved of covetouſneſs, which Luther was ſuch an enemy to, that it is ſaid to be againſt his very nature. Now, I ſay, tho' the abſtaining from theſe ſins be highly commendable in all ſorts of perſons, yet, unleſs, together with the ſtreams of their natural diſpoſition, there run likewiſe a ſpiritual deſire to pleaſe God, and obey his commands, their abſtaining from theſe vices is no more than the brute beaſts themſelves do, who always act according to the temper of their bodies, and are never guilty of any exceſſes that are prejudicial to them.

Hence, ſervants are commanded to be *obedient to their maſters, with good-will doing ſervice as to the Lord, and not to men*, Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7. which clearly ſhews, that tho' a ſervant doth obey his maſter, yet if he doth not do it in obedience to God, he will not find acceptance with him. So that, whenſoever I ſet my hand to any action that is good, I muſt ſtill fix my eye upon God's commanding of it, and do it only in reſpect to that; as knowing, that if I give but a farthing to the poor, in all my life, and do it in obedience to God's commands, it ſhall be accepted ſooner than theirs, who feed hundreds at their table every day and have not reſpect to the ſame command.

Do I ſee a poor wretch ready to fall down to the earth for want of a little ſupport, and my bowels begin to yern towards him? Let me ſearch into my heart, and ſee what it is that raiſes this compaſſion in me. If it flows only from a natural tenderneſs to a brother in miſery, without regard to the love of God, who has commanded and enjoined it, the poor man may be ſuccoured and relieved, but God will not be pleaſed or delighted with it. Again, do my friends ſtir me up to pray or hear, or do any other ſpiritual or civil action, and I therefore only do it becauſe of their importunity? I may ſatisfy my friends deſire, but cannot properly be ſaid to obey the commands of God, in ſuch a performance: So that the great and only foundation that I muſt reſolve to build all the actions of my life upon, is, an uniform obediehce to that God, by whom alone I am enabled to perform them.

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to do every thing with Prudence and Diſcretion, as well as with Zeal and Affection.*

WHILST I am penned up in this earthly tabernacle, I live almoſt as in a darkſome dungeon, having no light to work by, but a little that ſprings in at the narrow crevices of my underſtanding. So that I had need to make uſe of all that little light and knowledge I have, to regulate the heat and zeal that ſometimes ſit upon my ſpirit. For good paſſions may ſometimes carry me into bad actions: My zeal, when hot in the purſuit of God's glory, may ſometimes hurry me beyond his laws; eſpecially, when Chriſtian prudence hath

not firſt chalked out the way, and ſet the bounds for it: As, in diſcourſe, my zeal may put me upon throwing pearls before ſwine, or uſing words, when ſilence may be more commendable: So in my actions too, unleſs wiſdom and diſcretion govern and command my affections, I ſhall frequently run into ſuch as would be altogether needleſs and impertinent, and therefore ought to be omitted; and daily neglect ſeveral duties, which ought to be performed.

But, my underſtanding and diſcretion is chiefly requiſite for the ordering of time and place, and other particular circumſtances, the irregular management of which may eaſily ſpoil the beſt of actions. For inſtance, that may be a good work at one time and place, which is not at another; and may be very innocent and becoming in one perſon, though quite contrary in another. It is therefore the proper office of my underſtanding to point out the fitteſt time and place, and perſon, for the performance of each action I engage in. As for example, in diſtributing to the poor, my hand of charity muſt be either guided by the eye of underſtanding, where, when, how much, and to whom to give; or elſe I may, at the ſame time, not only offend God, but wrong my neighbour and myſelf too. And ſo for all other actions whatſoever, which I ought therefore never to ſet myſelf about, though it be of the loweſt rank, without conſulting the rules of wiſdom, modelled by the law of God.

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, never to ſet my Hand, my Head, or my Heart, about any Thing but what I verily believe is good in itſelf, and will be eſteemed ſo by GOD.*

WITHOUT faith, the Apoſtle tells me, *it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. xi. 5. *For whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*, Rom. xiv. 23. Where, by faith, we are not to underſtand that ſaving faith, whereby I believe that my perſon is juſtified thro' CHRIST; but that, whereby I believe that my works ſhall be accepted by GOD: For faith here is oppoſed to doubting; and that, not about CHRIST's dying for me, or my living in him, but about the particular actions of my life. *He that doubteth*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *is damned if he eats*, that is, He that eateth that which he doubteth whether it may be lawfully eat or no, is damned, becauſe he

ſins in doing it, and therefore may be damned for it. But why ſo? becauſe *he eateth not of faith*; becauſe he doth that which he knows not whether he may do or no, not believing it to be really good in itſelf, or acceptable unto God. And, though the Apoſtle here inſtances only in that particular action of eating, yet what he ſays with relation to that, is properly applicable to all the other actions of life: For he afterwards ſubjoins, *Whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin:* whatſoever it is, good or bad, if not done by faith, it is ſin.

And truly, this particular will be of great uſe through my whole life for the avoiding of many ſins, and for the doing of much good: For, many things which are good in themſelves, may, for want of faith, become quite otherwiſe to me; my heart not believing what I do is good, my hand can never make it ſo. Or, if I think what I do is bad, tho' it be not ſo in itſelf, yet my very thinking it ſo, will make it ſo to me.

And this is what we call doing a thing with a good conſcience, or keeping, as St. Paul did, *our conſcience void of offence.* And to go contrary to the dictates of my conſcience in this particular, is to tranſgreſs the commands of God. For in this, conſcience is as God's vicegerent in my ſoul; what conſcience commands, God commands; what conſcience forbids, God forbids; that is, I am as really under the power of conſcience, as the commands of God, in ſuch a caſe. So that, if I do not obey the former, it is impoſſible for me to obey the latter. But how much then doth it behove me to ſee, that my conſcience be rightly informed in every thing? For as if a Judge be miſinformed, it is impoſſible he ſhould paſs righteous judgment; ſo, if conſcience be miſinformed, it is impoſſible I ſhould do a righteous act. And, what a miſerable caſe ſhall I then be in? If I do what is in itſelf ſinful, tho' my conſcience tell me it is good, yet I ſin, becauſe the act in itſelf is ſinful; and if I do what in itſelf is good, and my conſcience tells me it is bad, becauſe my conſcience tells me it is bad, I ſin becauſe my conſcience tells me it is ſo: So that as my conſcience is, ſo will my actions be.

For this reaſon, I reſolve, in the preſence of my great Creator, never to do any thing, till I have firſt informed my conſcience from the word of God, whether it be lawful for me to do it, or no; or in caſe it be not determined there, to make a ſtrict ſearch and inquiry into each circumſtance of it, conſidering with myſelf what good or evil may iſſue from it,

and ſo what good or evil there is in it; and according as my conſcience, upon the hearing of the argument on both ſides, ſhall decide the matter, I ſhall do, or not do it; never undertaking any thing upon mere ſurmiſes, becauſe it may be good, but upon a real and thoro' perſuaſion that it is ſo.

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to do all Things for the Glory of GOD.*

AS I was not made by, ſo neither for myſelf; for God, ſays the wiſe man, made all things for himſelf, *Prov.* xvi. 4. And being thus made for GOD, it follows on courſe, that I ought to act for GOD; otherwiſe I ſhall fruſtate the end of my creation. Inſomuch that whatſoever I make my chief aim in what I do, I make that my God: Do I aim at the glory of the All-glorious Jehovah? It is him I make my God: Do I aim at riches? then it is Mammon I make my God: And therefore it is that covetouſneſs is called idolatry, *Col.* iii. 5. Do I aim at pleaſures? it is my ſenſes I make my God, *Phil.* iii. 19. Do I aim at popular applauſe, or worldly advancement? or, do I aim at my own health or life? Theſe are my Gods. For what is worſhipping, but making all the powers of my ſoul, and actions of my body, to bow and ſtoop to them? Hence it is, that the moſt High God, who hath ſaid, *He will not give his glory to another*, hath been ſo expreſs in commanding me to do all things to his glory, *Whether ye eat or drink*, ſays the Apoſtle, *or whatſoever you do, do all things to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31.

But how can I, poor worm, be ſaid to do any thing to the glory of the eternal GOD? Why, in the ſame manner as he is ſaid to do what he doth for his own glory? and how is that? By manifeſting his glory to others. Thus, if I can but ſo live and act, as thereby to evidence, that the God I ſerve is a glorious GOD, glorious in holineſs, glorious in goodneſs, glorious in wiſdom, glorious in power, and the like; this is doing all things to the glory of God. For example, by praying to God, I avouch him to be a God, infinite in knowledge, that he is preſent with me, and hears me pray, whereſoever I am; and I own him to be infinite in mercy, in that he will ſuffer ſuch a ſinful creature as I am to addreſs myſelf to him, *&c.* And ſo

there is not the leaſt action I undertake, but I am ſo to manage it, as to manifeſt the glory of God by it, making it my end and deſign ſo to do; otherwiſe let me do what I will I am ſure to ſin; for tho' I confeſs, a good end can never make a bad action good, yet a bad end will always make a good action bad: So that, as ever I would do any thing that is good, I muſt be ſure to do it to the glory of God.

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to mingle ſuch Recreations with my Buſineſs, as to further my Buſineſs by my Recreations.*

HAVING wholly devoted myſelf to God, all I have, or am, is ſtill to be improved for him; inſomuch that was it not for the neceſſities of nature, every moment of my life, ſhould and ought to be ſpent in the immediate worſhip and ſervice of him. But tho' nature requires ſome time from my ſolemn ſerving him, for the recreating of myſelf; yet grace requireth, that this recreating of myſelf ſhould ſtill be for the promoting his ſervice; ſo that my recreations do not only fit me for farther ſervice, but they, in themſelves, ſhould ſome way or other, be ſerviceable to him; which that they may be I muſt have as great a care in the choice, as in the uſe of my recreations.

There are ſome recreations that are ſo far from conducing to his ſervice, that they may make more for the incenſing of his wrath: As drinking and gaming, which though in themſelves lawful, yet, as they often prove an occaſion of ſwearing, lying, cheating, and contention amongſt men, and, by conſequence of wrath in God; ſo they ought, by all means, to be ſhunned and avoided. Indeed, it may be queſtioned, whether gaming be ever a lawful recreation? For, either it is a lottery, or not. If it be a lottery, it is not lawful, becauſe it is a great preſumption and ſin to ſet God at work to recreate ourſelves; for poor nothings to employ the chiefeſt good, immediately to determine ſuch frivolous and trifling impertinencies. If it be not a lottery, then it is not a pure recreation, for if it depends upon man's wit and ſtudy, it exerciſes his brain and ſpirits, as much as if he were about other things: So that being on one ſide not lawful, on the other ſide, no recreation; it can, on ſide, be a lawful recreation.

For, what is the end of recreation, but to revive my languiſhing ſpirits, to let them reſt and be quiet a little, when they are tired with too much exerciſe, that they be freſher, livelier, and fitter for work afterwards? Hence it is, that God indeed hath provided a recreation for all ſenſible creatures; ſleep, which is the reſt of the ſpirits in the nerves. When the little animal ſpirits have been all the day running up and down upon the ſoul's errands, to lie down ſtill and quiet, is a great refreſhment and revivement to them, provided ſtill, that it be moderately uſed. Whereas the indulging ourſelves too much in it, is rather a clogging and ſtupifying of them; as we ſee in our bodies, which, when not accuſtomed to, are moſt averſe from, and unfit for exerciſe.

So that the chief and only time for recreation, is, when my ſpirits are either weary with labour and ſtudy, or elſe called in to ſome neceſſary employment in ſome other place; as at and after meals, eſpecially ſuch as are of a hard digeſtion; for then the ſpirits have enough to do, to turn the food we eat into good nouriſhment. And, therefore, the intenſeneſs of ſtudy, running, wreſtling, and ſuch like violent exerciſes, are not proper at ſuch a time; becauſe, in ſtudying, we draw the ſpirits from the ſtomach to the head; ſo in the other exerciſes, ſuch as moderate walking, conference, and free diſcourſe, about common but neceſſary points, we ſend them from the ſtomach into other parts of the body, where they are to be ſet on work.

But, that which I have found the beſt recreation, both to my body and mind, whenſoever either of them ſtands in need of it, is Muſic, which exerciſes, at once, both my body and my ſoul; eſpecially when I play myſelf. For then, methinks, the ſame motion that my hand makes upon the inſtrument, the inſtrument makes upon my heart; it calls in my ſpirits, compoſes my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and ſo, not only fits me for after buſineſs, but fills my heart, at the preſent, with pure and uſeful thoughts, ſo that when the muſic ſounds the ſweetlieſt in my ears, truth commonly flows the cleareſt into my mind. And hence it is, that I find my ſoul is become more harmonious, by being accuſtomed ſo much to harmony, and ſo averſe to all manner of diſcord, that the leaſt jarring ſounds, either in notes or words, ſeem very harſh and unpleaſant to me.

That there is ſomething more than ordinary in Muſic, appears from David's making uſe of it, for driving away the evil ſpirit from Saul, and Eliſha for the bringing of the good ſpirit upon himſelf. From which I am induced to believe, that there is really a ſort of ſecret and charming power in it, that naturally diſpels, from the mind, all or moſt of thoſe black humours, which the evil ſpirit uſes to brood upon, and by compoſing it into a more regular, ſweet and docible diſpoſition, renders it the fitter for the holy Spirit to work upon, the more ſuſceptible of divine grace, and more faithful meſſenger, whereby to convey truth to the underſtanding. But however that be, I muſt neceſſarily acknowledge, that of all recreations, that is by far the more ſuitable to my temper and diſpoſition, in that it is not only an exerciſe to my body, but to my mind too; my ſpirits being thereby made the more nimble and active, and, by conſequence, the fitter to wait upon my ſoul, and be employed by her, in whatever buſineſs ſhe is engaged.

But in this and all other recreations, I muſt always take care not to exceed my meaſure, either in point of time or intention; I muſt not follow them too cloſe, nor ſpend too many hours in them, but ſtill reſolve to uſe them, as they may not become a ſnare to me, but anſwer the ends for which they were deſigned, that when God ſhall call me to it, I may give him as good an account of my recreations, as of my neceſſary duties.

## *Concerning my* RELATIONS.

BUT be not deceived, O my ſoul; thou art not yet advanced far enough; it is not ſufficient to pretend to holineſs in my thoughts and affections, and in my words and actions; unleſs I expreſs it likewiſe in all the relations and conditions of life. The *Commandments of God are* ſaid to be *exceeding broad:* they extend themſelves to every capacity I can poſſibly be in, not only enjoining me to live ſoberly in reſpect to myſelf, but righteouſly to my neighbour, obediently to my ſovereign, lovingly to my wife, and faithfully to my people; otherwiſe I cannot live holily unto God; and, therefore, if I would be thoroughly religious, I muſt farther endeavour to fix my reſolutions with regard to the ſeveral duties the Moſt High

expects from me, in all these particular relations I bear to him, during my sojourning here on earth.

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am resolved, by the Grace of GOD, to honour and obey the King, or Prince, whom GOD is pleased to set over me, as well as to expect that he should safeguard and protect me, whom GOD is pleased to set under him.*

THE *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, the great and glorious monarch of all the world, having enacted many gracious laws, is pleased to set over every kingdom and nation such persons as may put them in execution. So that I cannot but look upon a lawful king, as truly a representative of the most High God, as a parliament is of the people; and am therefore persuaded, that whoever rebels against him, rebels against God himself; not only in that he rebels against the ordinance of God, and so, against the God of that ordinance, but because he rebels against him, whom God hath set up as his vicegerent, to represent his person, and execute his laws in such a part of his dominions.

Hence it is, that these two precepts, *Fear GOD*, and *honour the king*, are so often joined together in holy writ; for he that fears God's power cannot but honour his authority; and he that honours not the king, that represents God, cannot be said to fear God, who is represented by him. And hence, likewise, it is, that God has been as strict and express in enjoining us obedience to our governors as to himself; for, thus saith the Lord of hosts, *Rom.* xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* Why? because *there is no power but of GOD; the powers that be, are ordained of GOD.*

And he hath denounced as great a judgment against such as rebel against the magistrate he hath ordained, as against those that rebel against himself; *For whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of GOD; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation*, ver. 2. So that the wrath of God shall as certainly fall upon those that rise up against the king, as upon those that fight against God. And no wonder that the punishment should be the same, when the fault is the same: For he that fights against his king, fights against God himself, who hath invested him with that power and authority to govern his people, representing his own glorious majesty before them.

Upon this ground it is, that I believe the wickedneſs of a prince cannot be a ſufficient plea for the diſobedience of his ſubjects; for it is not the holineſs, but the authority of God that he repreſents, which the moſt wicked, as well as the moſt holy perſon, may be endowed with: and therefore, when the Goſpel firſt began to ſpread itſelf over the earth, though there was no Chriſtian king, or ſupreme magiſtrate, of what title ſoever, to cheriſh and protect it; nay, though the civil powers were then the greateſt enemies to it; yet, even then were the diſciples of Chriſt enjoined to *ſubmit themſelves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's ſake.*

Inſomuch, that did I live among the Turks, I ſhould look upon it as my duty to obey the Grand Signior, in all his lawful edicts, as well as the moſt Chriſtian and pious king in the world. For, ſuppoſe a prince be never ſo wicked, and never ſo negligent in his duty of protecting me, it doth not follow, that I muſt neglect mine of obeying him. In ſuch a caſe, I have another duty added to this; and that is to pray for him, and intercede with God for his converſion: For thus hath the King of Kings commanded, that *prayers, ſupplications, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, be made as for all men,* ſo more eſpecially, *for kings and thoſe that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty,* 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. So that, whenſoever I addreſs to the court of heaven, I muſt be ſure to remember my ſovereign upon earth, that God would be pleaſed to enable his ſervant to reign on earth as himſelf doth in heaven, in righteouſneſs and mercy. But eſpecially, in caſe of any ſeeming or real default or defect, though I do not think it a ſubject's duty to judge or cenſure their ſovereign's actions, I am to be the more earneſt in my prayers and interceſſions for him; but, upon no account to fight or rebel againſt him.

And, if I am thus ſtrictly obliged to honour, obey, and pray for a bad prince, how much more ſhould I pay thoſe duties to one, who repreſents God, not only in his authority, but in his holineſs too? In this caſe, ſure, as there is a double engagement to reverence and obedience, ſo I am doubly puniſhable, if I neglect to ſhew it, either to the prince himſelf, or thoſe that are ſet under him; for the ſame obligations that lie upon me, for my obedience to the king, bind me likewiſe to obey his inferior officers and magiſtrates, that act under him; and that for this reaſon, be-

cauſe, as he repreſents God, ſo they repreſent him; and, therefore, whatever they command, in his name, I look upon it as much my duty to obey, as if it was commanded by his own mouth; and, accordingly, do, from this moment, by the grace of God, reſolve to put this duty in practice.

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the ſame Divine Grace, to be as conſtant in loving of my Wife, as cautious in chuſing her.*

THOUGH it be not neceſſary for me to reſolve upon marrying, yet it may not be improper to reſolve, in caſe I ſhould, to follow theſe rules of duty; firſt in the choice of a wife; and ſecondly, in the affection that I ought to bear towards her.

As for the firſt, I ſhall always endeavour to make choice of ſuch a woman for my ſpouſe, who hath firſt made choice of CHRIST as a ſpouſe for herſelf; that none may be made one fleſh with me, who is not alſo made one ſpirit with CHRIST my Saviour. For I look upon the image of CHRIST as the beſt mark of beauty I can behold in her; and the Grace of God, as the beſt portion I can receive with her. Theſe are excellencies, which, though not viſible to carnal eyes, are nevertheleſs agreeable to a ſpiritual heart; and ſuch as all wiſe and good men cannot chuſe but be enamoured with. For my own part, they ſeem to me ſuch neceſſary qualifications, that my heart trembles at the thoughts of ever having a wife without them. What? ſhall I marry one that is wedded already to her ſins, or have poſſeſſion of her body only, when the devil hath poſſeſſion of her ſoul? ſhall ſuch a one be united to me here, who ſhall be ſeparated from me for ever hereafter, and be condemned to ſcorch in everlaſting burning? No, if it ever be my lot to enter into that ſtate, I beg of God, that he would direct me in the choice of ſuch a wife only to lie in my boſom here, as may afterwards be admitted to reſt in Abraham's boſom to all eternity; ſuch a one, as will ſo live and pray, and converſe with me upon earth, that we may be both entitled to ſing, to rejoice, and be bleſſed together, for ever, in heaven.

That this, therefore, may be my portion and felicity, I firmly reſolve, never to ſet upon a deſign, before I have firſt ſolicited the throne of grace, and begged of my heavenly Fa-

ther, to honour me with the partnerſhip of one of his beloved children; and ſhall afterwards be as careful and cautious as I can, never to fix my affections upon any woman for a wife, till I am thoroughly perſuaded of the grounds I have to love her, as a true Chriſtian.

If I could be thus happy, as to meet with a wife of theſe qualities and endowments, it would be impoſſible for me not to be hearty and ſincere in my affection toward her, even though I had the greateſt temptations to place them upon another: For, how could I chuſe but love her, who has God for her father, the church for her mother, and heaven for her portion; who loves God, and is beloved of him? eſpecially, when I conſider, that this love to her, will not only be my duty but my happineſs too.

As to the duty, it is frequently inculcated in the ſcripture, that *huſbands ſhall love their wives*, and that not with a common love, but as CHRIST loved his Church, *Eph.* v. 25. yea, as their own body, *ver.* 28. or, as themſelves, *ver.* 33. and they are ſo to love them, as not to be *bitter againſt them*, Col. iii. 19. not to be paſſionate or angry with them upon every light matter, nor ſuffer their reſentments to riſe to that height, upon any occaſion whatſoever, as to abate the leaſt ſpark of conjugal affection towards them, but to *nouriſh and cheriſh them even as the Lord the church*. In a word, to do all the kind offices they can for them, in their civil capacities, and to help and forward them, by all means poſſible, in the way that leads to heaven; that as they are united in the fleſh, ſo they may likewiſe be united in the ſpirit, and raiſed and rewarded together at the general reſurrection.

And, as love is the great duty, ſo it is likewiſe the chief happineſs of a married ſtate. I do not mean that love whereby ſhe loves me, but that wherewith I love her; for, if I myſelf have not a cordial eſteem and affection for her, what happineſs will it be to me, to be beloved by her? or rather, what a miſery would it be to be forced to live with one I know I cannot love? As ever, therefore, I deſire to be happy, I muſt perform my duty in this particular, and never aim at any other end, in the choice of a wife, nor expect any other happineſs in the enjoyment of her, but what is founded in the principle of pure and inviolable love. If I ſhould court and marry a woman for riches, then, whenſoever they fail, or take their flight, my love and my happineſs muſt drop and vaniſh

together with them. If I chuſe her for beauty only, I ſhall love her no longer than while that continues, which is only till age or ſickneſs blaſts it, and then farewell at once, both duty and delight.

But if I love her for her virtues, and for the ſake of GOD, who has enjoined it as a duty, that our affections ſhould not be alienated, or ſeparated by any thing but death; then, though all the other ſandy foundations fail, yet will my happineſs remain entire; even though I ſhould not perceive thoſe mutual returns of love, which are due from her to me upon the ſame bottom. But, oh! the happineſs of that couple, whoſe inclinations to each other are as mutual as their duties; whoſe affections, as well as perſons, are linked together with the ſame tye! this is the chief condition required to make the ſtate of matrimony happy or deſireable, and ſhall be the chief motive, with me, to influence me to enter into it. For, though it be no happineſs to be beloved by one I do not love; yet it is certainly a very great one to be beloved by one I do. If this, then, be my lot, to have mutual expreſſions of love from the perſon I fix my affections upon, what joy and comfort will it raiſe in my heart? with what peace and amity ſhall we live together here? and what glory and felicity may we not promiſe ourſelves hereafter?

What is here ſaid of the duty in chuſing and loving of a wife, may be likewiſe applied to a woman's duty in chuſing and loving her huſband. But being not ſo immediately concerned in this, I paſs on to my next reſolution.

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to do my Endeavour to give to GOD whatſoever Children He ſhall be pleaſed to give me; that as they are mine by Nature, they may be His by Grace.*

I HAVE ſometimes wondered at the providence of God, in bringing ſo many millions of people out of the loins of one man; and cannot but make this uſe of it, even to ſtir up myſelf to a double diligence, in bringing up my children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. For who knows, but the ſalvation of ten thouſand ſouls may depend upon the education of one ſingle child?

If I train up my ſon in the ways of religion, and teach

him what it is to *keep a conſcience void of offence towards God and towards man*; he will then not only have an inward ſenſe of his own duty, but take all poſſible care to inſtil it into others, whether children or ſervants, that are committed to his charge; and theſe, again, will do the ſame to theirs, by teaching them to walk in the ſame path; till, by degrees, the piety and holineſs of one man has diffuſed itſelf to all ſucceeding generations. But now, on the other hand, if I neglect the care of my ſon's education, and ſuffer the leproſy of ſin and wickedneſs to taint and corrupt him, it is great odds, without an extraordinary interpoſition of divine grace, but the infection may ſpread itſelf over all my poſterity: and ſo draw down upon me the curſes and accuſations of ten thouſand ſouls in hell, which might otherwiſe have been praiſing and bleſſing God for me, to all eternity, in heaven.

Hence it it, that I am reſolved to endeavour to be a ſpiritual, as well as natural father to my children; yea, to take more care to get a portion for their ſouls in heaven, than to make proviſion for their bodies upon earth. For, if he be accounted *worſe than an infidel that provides not for his family*, the ſuſtenance of their bodies, what is he that ſuffers his family to neglect the ſalvation of their ſouls?

That nothing of this, therefore, may be laid to my charge, if ever providence ſees fit to bleſs me with children of my own, I will take effectual care, ſo ſoon as conveniently I can, to devote them unto God by baptiſm; that what guilt they have contracted, by coming thro' my loins, may be waſhed away by the laver of regeneration; and then to be conſtantly ſoliciting at the throne of grace, that he who hath given them to me, would be pleaſed likewiſe to give himſelf to them.

The next thing to be done, as ſoon as they come to be capable of inſtruction, is to take all occaſions and make uſe of all means, to work the knowledge of God into their heads, and the grace of CHRIST into their hearts; by teaching them to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*; by acquainting them with the duties that he that made them expects from them; with the rewards they ſhall have, if dutiful; and the puniſhments they ſhall feel, if diſobedient children; ſtill accommodating my expreſſions to the ſhallow capacity of their tender years. And, according to their doing, or not doing, of what they have been told, I ſhall reward them with what is

moſt pleaſing, or puniſh them with what is moſt diſpleaſing to their years. To ſpeak to them of heaven and eternal glory, will not encourage them ſo much, as to give their them childiſh pleaſures and deſires: And the denouncing of a future hell will not affright them ſo much as the inflicting a preſent ſmart. Hence it is, that Solomon ſo often inculcates this upon parents, as their duty to their children, that they ſhould not *ſpare the rod, leſt they ſpoil the child.*

But I muſt ſtill take care to let them underſtand, that what I do is from a principle of love and affection to them, not of fury and indignation againſt them: For, by this means God may correct me for correcting them: I may ſet before my children ſuch an example of indiſcreet and ſinful paſſion, as they will be apt enough to learn, without my teaching them. On the other hand, it behoves me, if poſſible, ſo to order my family, that my children may not ſee or hear, and ſo not learn, any thing but goodneſs in it; for commonly, according to what we learn when we are young, we practiſe when we are old. And, therefore, as I ſhall take great care, that my children learn nothing that is evil or ſinful at home; ſo likewiſe that they do not come into ſuch company abroad, where their innocence may be aſſaulted with ſwearing, curſing, or any kind of prophane or obſcene diſcourſe, which the generality of our youth are ſo obnoxious to.

Or at leaſt, if this is not wholly to be avoided, to prevent thoſe poiſonous weeds from taking root in the heart, it behoves me to take all opportunities of diſcourſing to them of GOD and CHRIST, of the immortality of their ſouls, and the future ſtate they are to be doomed to in another world, when they have lived a little while in this; that, according as they grow in years, they may *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Chriſt.* And when they come to years of diſcretion, capable of doing farther honour and ſervice to God and their country, by ſome calling or profeſſion, I muſt be ſure to place them in ſuch a one as may be no hindrance to that high and heavenly calling, which they have in *Chriſt Jeſus*, but rather contribute to further and promote it; that, being like tender plants engrafted into the true vine, they may bring forth much fruit, to God's glory, to my comfort, and their own ſalvation.

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to do my duty to my Servants as well as expect they ſhould do theirs to me.*

IT was Joſhua's, and, by God's grace, it ſhall be my reſolution, that *I and my houſe fear the LORD.* I, in the firſt place, and then my houſe; for if I myſelf do not, I cannot expect that they ſhould. So that, for the ordering of my family in general, I muſt not only preſs their duty upon them, but likewiſe practiſe my own duty, in ſuppreſſing all vicious and lewd converſation, and compoſing all ſtrife and contention amongſt them; in praying every day, at leaſt twice with them; in catechiſing and expounding the principles of religion to them, and in calling for an account of every ſermon and godly diſcourſe they hear, either in private or in public; in ſeeing that they conſtantly frequent the divine ordinances, and that they behave themſelves ſo conſcientiouſly therein, that they may be, ſome way or other, the better by them. And to theſe ends, I think it my duty to allow my ſervants ſome time, every day, wherein to ſerve God, as well as to ſee they ſpend their other hours in ſerving me; and to make them ſenſible that they do not ſerve me only for myſelf, but ultimately and principally in reference unto God; their ſerving me making way for my better ſerving God.

And, for this reaſon, I cannot believe, but 'tis as great a ſin to cumber my ſervants, as myſelf, with too much worldly buſineſs. For how can they ſpend any time in the ſervice of God, when I require all their time in my own? And how juſtly ſhould I be condemned, if by this means, I ſhould bring them into a ſort of neceſſity of ſinning, either in not obeying God, or not obeying me? not that I think it a ſervant's duty to neglect his Creator to ſerve his maſter; on the contrary, he is obliged, in all caſes, where their commands interfere, to *obey GOD, rather than man.* But where they do not, there is a ſtrict injunction upon all ſervants, that they ſhould be *obedient to their maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of heart, as unto* CHRIST, *Eph.* vi. 5. But how with fear and trembling? why, fearing leſt they ſhould offend God, in offending them, and trembling at the thoughts of being diſobedient to the divine command, which enjoins them

to *be obedient to their maſters in all things, not anſwering again*, Tit. ii. 9. that is, not repining at their maſter's lawful commands, not muttering and maundring againſt them, as ſome are apt to do: For it is as great a ſin in ſervants to ſpeak irreverently to their maſters, as in maſters to ſpeak paſſionately to their ſervants.

But how are ſervants to give obedience to their maſters, *with ſingleneſs of heart, as unto Chriſt*; why, by obeying them only in obedience unto *Chriſt*; that is, they are therefore to do their maſter's will, becauſe it it the LORD's will they ſhould do it; ſerving them, *not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart, with good-will doing ſervice, as unto the LORD, and not to men*, Eph. vi. 6, 7. Col. iii. 22. This is the duty therefore that I ſhall be oft inculcating upon my ſervants, and ſhall as oft be reflecting upon myſelf, that what I require for my own ſervice may be always in ſubordination to God's, who is our common Lord and maſter, whoſe laws are equally obliging to all ranks and conditions of men, and in whoſe ſight *there is no reſpect of perſons*.

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to feed the Flock that God ſhall ſet me over, with wholeſome Food, neither ſtarving them by Idleneſs, poiſoning with Error, nor puffing them up with Impertinence.*

AND here I cannot but declare, that ever ſince I knew what it was to ſtudy, I have found by experience, that ſpiritual and intellectual pleaſures do as far ſurpaſs thoſe that are temporal and ſenſual, as the ſoul exceeds the body. And, for this reaſon, as I always thought the ſtudy and profeſſion of divinity to be the nobleſt and moſt agreeable of all others, as carrying with it its own encouragement and reward; ſo I have often wondered with myſelf, that the greateſt perſons in the world ſhould not be deſirous and ambitious of exerciſing their part in the ſtudy of this neceſſary, as well as ſublime ſcience, and even devoting themſelves to the profeſſion of it. For, do they aſpire after honour? What greater honour can there be, than to be the mouth of God to the people, and of the people unto God; to have the Moſt High himſelf, not only to ſpeak by them, but in them too: What greater honour than to have a commiſſion from the King of Kings, to repre-

ſent himſelf before his people, and call them, in this name, to *return from the error of their ways*, and walk in the paths of God to everlaſting glory? What greater honour than to be an inſtrument, in his hand, to bring poor ſouls from the gates of hell, to ſet them among princes in the court of heaven? Do they thirſt after pleaſures? What greater pleaſure can they have, than to make it their buſineſs to feed themſelves and others with the bread and water of life?

But ſtay, my ſoul, let not thy thoughts run only upon the dignity of thy function, and the ſpiritual pleaſures that attend the faithful diſcharge of it; but think likewiſe upon the ſtrict account thou muſt give of it in another life: The ſerious conſideration of which, as it cannot but be a great comfort to the true and faithful paſtor, who has diligently fed his flock with the *ſincere milk of God's word*; ſo muſt it be a great terror and confuſion to the ſlothful and negligent, the falſe and deceitful diſpenſers of the divine myſteries, who have either careleſsly loſt, or treacherouſly deluded the ſouls of thoſe committed to their charge, which they muſt one day anſwer for, as well as for their own. And, therefore, that nothing of this kind may ever be laid to my charge, I ſolemnly promiſe and reſolve, before God, ſo to demean myſelf in the exerciſe of my miniſterial function, as to make the care of ſouls, eſpecially of thoſe committed to my charge, the chief ſtudy and buſineſs of my life.

And that without partiality or exception, I muſt not ſingle out ſome of the beſt of my flock, ſuch as I have the higheſt reſpect for, or have received the greateſt obligations from; but *miniſter to every one according to their ſeveral neceſſities*. If I meet with men of knowledge and virtue, my buſineſs muſt be to confirm and eſtabliſh them therein; if with thoſe that are ignorant and immoral, to teach and inſtruct them in the ways of religion, and by all means poſſible, to reclaim and reduce them to the exerciſe of their duty; always remembering, that as the bleſſed JESUS, the *great ſhepherd and biſhop of our ſouls, was not ſent, ſave unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, and came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*; ſo it is the indiſpenſable duty of his Apoſtles and miniſters (and by the grace of God I ſhall make it mine) to follow his example in this particular; to ſpare no time nor pains in the reformation of ſinners, though it be never ſo irkſome and difficult to accompliſh; even tho' I ſhould meet with ſuch as the prophet David ſpeaks of, *who hate to be reformed, and*

*caſt my words behind them.* And therefore as I know it is my duty, ſo I ſhall always endeavour to take pleaſure in the ſeveral offices I perform of this kind, *to ſtrengthen the weak, heal the wounded, and bind up the broken heart*; to call in thoſe that err and go aſtray, and *ſeek and ſave them that are loſt.*

To theſe ends, tho' preaching is, without doubt, a moſt excellent and uſeful, as well as neceſſary duty (eſpecially if it be performed, as it ought, with zeal and reverence, and the doctrine applied and preſſed home, with ſincerity of affection) yet, I ſhall not think it ſufficient to inſtruct my people only from the pulpit, but take all opportunities to inſtil good thoughts and principles into their minds in my private converſation. I know it is impoſſible for all miniſters frequently to viſit every particular perſon or family in their pariſh, there being, in ſome pariſhes, eſpecially in and about London, ſo many thouſands of ſouls: But, howſoever, if it ſhould pleaſe the Lord to call me to ſuch a flock, though I cannot viſit all, I ſhall viſit as many as I can; eſpecially thoſe that are ſick or infirm, and be ſure to feed them *with the ſincere milk of the word*, ſuch as may turn to their ſpiritual nouriſhment, and make them *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* JESUS CHRIST. I will not fill their heads with ſpeculative notions and niceties in divinity; (which, among the leſs judicious, are very often the occaſion of hereſy and error, and ſometimes alſo, of deluſion and diſtraction:) But my chief care ſhall be to inſtruct them in thoſe neceſſary truths which their Chriſtian faith indiſpenſably obliges them to know and believe, and preſs them to the performance of thoſe duties, without which they cannot be ſaved; meekly and impartially reproving the particular vices they are moſt inclined and addicted to, and chearfully encouraging and improving whatever virtuous actions they are, any of them, exemplary in, and whatever good habits and inclinations the divine grace has put into their hearts.

And ſince love and charity is the great characteriſtic of our profeſſion, the bond and cement of all other Chriſtian duties, in order to make my miniſtry the more ſucceſsful, I reſolve, in the laſt place, not only to avoid all differences and diſputes with them myſelf, but amicably to compoſe all ſuch as may ariſe among the neighbours. In a word, I ſhall make it my endeavour, in all things, ſo to approve myſelf as a faithful miniſter, both in life and doctrine be-

fore them, that at the laſt day, when the great God ſhall call for my pariſh, and myſelf to appear before him, I may be prepared to give an account of both; at leaſt, to anſwer for as many of them as he requires; and may, with joy and comfort, pronounce this ſentence of my Saviour, if it may, without offence, be applied to his miniſters, *behold I, and the children which thou haſt given me.*

## RESOLUTION VI.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to be as faithful and conſtant to my Friend, as I would have my Friend to be faithful and conſtant to me.*

HAVING before reſolved to be zealous in loving God, I here reſolve to be as conſtant in loving my friend. But why do I reſolve upon this? Is it poſſible to live and not to love? This to me ſeems as plain a contradiction, as to live and not to live. For love, in my opinion, is as much the life of the ſoul, as the ſoul is the life of the body. So that, for my own part, I ſhall expect to ceaſe to live, at the very moment that I ceaſe to love; nay, I do not look upon love only as my life, but as the joy and comfort of it too. And, for this reaſon, I ſhall never envy any man his riches, pleaſures, or preferments, provided that I can but enjoy the perſons my ſoul delights in, *viz.* CHRIST in the firſt place, and my friend and neighbour in the ſecond.

But then I muſt have a great care where and how I place this affection; for if I place it wrong, my very loving will be ſinning. And therefore, I ſhall always endeavour to make ſuch only my friends, as are friends to God. Not that I look upon it as neceſſary to love my friends always under that notion only as they are friends of God; for then, no love but that which is ſpiritual would be lawful; whereas there is, doubtleſs, a natural love, that is no leſs a duty, and, by conſequence, no leſs lawful, than the other; as, the love of parents towards their children, and children towards their parents; and the mutual complacency that ariſes betwixt friends, as well as relations, from the harmony and agreement of humours and tempers. Thus our Saviour is ſaid to have loved St. John more than any of his other diſciples, which cannot be underſtood of a ſpiritual love; for this, undoubtedly, was equal to all; but being a man ſubject to the like (paſſions tho' not imperfections) as we are, He

placed more natural affection upon, and might have more natural complacency in John than in his other diſciples.

And, therefore, when I ſay, I am to make ſuch my friends only, as are friends to God, my meaning is, that I will make none my friends, but ſuch as I know to be good men and good Chriſtians, ſuch as deſerve my love in a ſpiritual as well as a natural ſenſe; and ſince I may lawfully love my friend in both theſe ſenſes, the one is ſo far from being excluſive, that it is really perfective of the other. And for this reaſon, as the ſpiritual good of my friend is always to be preferred before that which is temporal, I am reſolved to found the one upon the other. I will always be ready, as oft as he ſtands in need, either of my advice, encouragement or aſſiſtance, to do him all the kind offices I can in his worldly affairs, to promote his intereſt, vindicate his character from ſecret aſperſions, and defend his perſon from open aſſaults: to be faithful and punctual in the performance of my promiſes to him, as well as in keeping the ſecrets he has entruſted me with. But all theſe things are to be done with a tender regard to the honour of God, and the duties of religion; ſo that the ſervices I do him in his temporal concerns, muſt be ſtill conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to, the ſpiritual intereſt and welfare of his immortal ſoul, in which I am principally obliged to manifeſt my friendſhip towards him. If I ſee him wander out of the right way, I muſt immediately take care to advertiſe him of it, and uſe the beſt means I can to bring him back to it. Or if I know him to be guilty of any reigning vices, I muſt endeavour to convince him of the danger and malignity of them, and importune and perſuade him to amend and forſake them. And laſtly, I muſt be as conſtant in keeping my friend, as cautious in chuſing him, ſtill continuing the heat of my affections towards him, in the day of his affliction, as well as in the height of his proſperity.

Theſe are the rules, whereby I reſolve to expreſs my friendſhip unto others, and whereby I would have others to expreſs their friendſhip unto me.

## *Concerning my* TALENTS.

HAVING ſo ſolemnly devoted myſelf to God, according to the covenant he hath made with me, and the duty

I owe to him; not only what I am, and what I do, but likewiſe what I have, is ſtill to be improved for him. And this I am bound to, not only upon a federal, but even a natural account; for whatſoever I have, I received from him, and therefore, all the reaſon in the world whatſoever I have, ſhould be improved for him. For, I look upon myſelf, as having no other property in what I enjoy, than a ſervant hath in what he is intruſted with to improve for his maſter's uſe: Thus, tho' I ſhould have ten thouſand pounds a year, I ſhould have no more of my own, than if I had but two pence in all the world. For it is only committed to my care for a ſeaſon, to be employed and improved to the beſt advantage, and will be called for again at the grand Audit, when I muſt anſwer for the uſe or abuſe of it; ſo that, whatſoever in a civil ſenſe I can call my own, that, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, I muſt eſteem as God's. And therefore it nearly concerns me to manage all the talents I am entruſted with as things I muſt give a ſtrict account for at the day of judgment. As God beſtows his mercies upon me, thro' the greatneſs of his love and affection, ſo I am to reſtore his mercies back again to him by the holineſs of my life and converſation. In a word, whatever I receive from his bounty, I muſt, ſome way or other, lay out for his glory, accounting nothing my own, any farther than as I improve it for God's ſake and the ſpiritual comfort of my own ſoul.

In order to this, I ſhall make it my endeavour, by the bleſſing of God, to put in practice the following reſolutions.

## RESOLUTION I.

*I am reſolved, if poſſible, to redeem my Time paſt, by uſing a double Diligence for the future, to employ and improve all the Gifts and Endowments, both of Body and Mind, to the Glory and Service of my great Creator.*

TIME, health, and parts, are three precious talents, generally beſtowed upon men, but ſeldom improved for God. To go no farther than myſelf, how much time and health have I enjoyed, by God's grace? and how little of it have I laid out for his honour? On the contrary, how oft have I offended, affronted, and provoked him, even when he has been courtting me with his favours, and daily pouring forth his benefits upon me? this, alas! is a ſad truth,

which whenſoever I ſeriouſly reflect upon, I cannot but acknowledge the continuance of my life as the greateſt inſtance of God's mercy and goodneſs, as well as the greateſt motive to my gratitude and obedience. In a due ſenſe, therefore, of the vanities and follies of my younger years, I deſire to take ſhame to myſelf for what is paſt, and do this morning humbly proſtrate myſelf before the throne of grace, to implore God's pardon, and to make ſolemn promiſes and reſolutions, for the future, to *caſt off the works of darkneſs, and to put on the armour of light*, and not only ſo, but to redeem the precious minutes I have ſquandered away, by huſbanding thoſe that remain, to the beſt advantage. I will not trifle and ſin away my time in the pleaſures of ſenſe, or the impertinencies of buſineſs, but ſhall always employ it in things that are neceſſary, uſeful, and proportion it to the weight and importance of the work or buſineſs I engage myſelf in; allotting ſuch a part of it for this buſineſs, and ſuch a part for that, ſo as to leave no intervals for unlawful or unneceſſary actions to thruſt themſelves in, and pollute my life and converſation.

For, ſince it has pleaſed God to favour me with the bleſſing of health, and I am not certain how ſoon I may be deprived of it, and thrown upon a bed of ſickneſs, which may deprive me of the uſe of my reaſon, or make me incapable of any thing elſe, but grappling with my diſtemper; it highly concerns me to make a due uſe of this bleſſing, while I have it; to improve theſe parts and gifts that God has endowed me with, to the manifeſtation of his glory, the ſalvation of my ſoul, and the public good of the community whereof I am a member.

To theſe ends, it will be requiſite for me frequently to conſider with myſelf, which way my weak parts may be the moſt uſefully employed, and to bend them to thoſe ſtudies and actions, which they are naturally the moſt inclined to, and delighted in, with the utmoſt vigour and application; more particularly in ſpiritual matters, to make uſe of all opportunities for the convincing others of God's love to them, and their ſins againſt God; of their miſery by nature, and happineſs by CHRIST, and when the truth of God happens to be any ways traduced or oppoſed, to be as valiant in the defence of it, as its enemies are violent in their aſſaults againſt it. And as I thus reſolve to employ my inward gifts and faculties for the glory and ſervice of God; ſo,

## RESOLUTION II.

*I am reſolved, by the divine Grace, to employ my riches, the outward bleſſings of Providence, to the ſame end; and to obſerve ſuch a due Medium in the diſpenſing of them, as to avoid Prodigality on the one Hand, and Covetouſneſs on the other.*

THIS, without doubt, is a neceſſary reſolution, but it is likewiſe very difficult to put in practice, without a careful obſervance of the following rules.

Firſt, never to laviſh out my ſubſtance, like the prodigal, in the revels of ſin and vanity, but, after a due proviſion for the neceſſities and conveniencies of life, to lay up the overplus for acts of love and charity towards my indigent brethren. I muſt conſider the uſes and ends for which God has entruſted me with ſuch and ſuch poſſeſſions; that they were not given me for the pampering my body, the feeding my luſts, or puffing me up with pride and ambition; but for advancing his glory, and my own, and the public good. But why do I ſay given? when, as I before obſerved, I have no property in the riches I poſſeſs; they are only lent me for a few years to be diſpenſed and diſtributed, as my great Lord and Maſter ſees fit to appoint, *viz.* for the benefit of the poor and neceſſitous, which he has made his deputies to call for and receive his money at my hands. And this, indeed, is the beſt uſe I can put it to, for my own advantage, as well as theirs: For the money I beſtow upon the poor, I give to God to lay up for me, and I have his infallible word and promiſe for it, that it ſhall be paid me again with unlimited intereſt out of his heavenly treaſury, which is infinite, eternal, and inexhauſtible. Hence it is, that whenſoever I ſee any fit object of charity, methinks I hear the Moſt High ſay unto me, give this poor brother ſo much of my ſtock, which thou haſt in thy hand, and I will place it to thy account, as given to myſelf; and *Look what thou layeſt out, and it ſhall be paid thee again.*

The ſecond rule is, never to ſpend a penny, where it can be better ſpared; nor to ſpare it, where it can be better ſpent. And this will oblige me, whenſoever any occaſion offers of laying out money, conſiderately to weigh the circumſtances of it, and, according as the matter, upon mature deliberation, requires, I muſt not grudge to ſpend it; or, if

at any time, I find more reaſon to ſpare, I muſt not dare to ſpend it; ſtill remembering, that as I am ſtrictly to account for the money GOD has given me, ſo I ought neither to be covetous in ſaving, or hoarding it up, nor profuſe in throwing it away, without a juſt occaſion. The main thing to be regarded, is the end I propoſe to myſelf in my expences, whether it be really the glory of GOD, or my own carnal humour and appetite.

For inſtance, if I lay out my money in cloathing my body, the queſtion muſt be, whether I do this only for warmth and decency, or to gratify my pride and vanity? If the former, my money is better ſpent; if the latter, it is better ſpared than ſpent: Again, do I lay it out in eating and drinking? if this be only to ſatisfy the neceſſities of nature, and make my life more eaſy and comfortable, it is, without doubt, very well ſpent; but if it be to feed my luxury and intemperance, it is much better ſpared; better for my ſoul in keeping it from ſin, and better for my body in preſerving it from ſickneſs; and this rule is the more ſtrictly to be obſerved, becauſe it is as great a fault in a ſervant not to lay out his maſter's money when he ſhould, as to lay it out when he ſhould not.

In order, therefore, to avoid both theſe etxremes, there is a third rule to be obſerved under this reſolution; and that is to keep a particular account of all my receipts and diſburſements, to ſet down in a book every penny I receive at the hands of the Almighty, and every penny I lay out for his honour and ſervice. By this means I ſhall be, in a manner, forced both to get my money lawfully, and to lay it out carefully: But how can I put that amongſt the money I have received from God, which I have got by unlawful means? certainly, ſuch money I may rather account as received from the Devil for his uſe, than from God, for his. And ſo muſt I either lay every penny out for God, or otherwiſe I ſhall not know where to ſet it down, for I muſt ſet down nothing but what I lay out for his uſe; and if it be not for his uſe, with what face can I ſay it was? And, by this means alſo, when God ſhall be pleaſed to call me to an account for what I received from him, I may with comfort appear before him; and having improved the talents he had committed to my charge, I may be received into his heavenly kingdom, with a *well-done good and faithful ſervant, enter thou into thy maſter's joy.*

## RESOLUTION III.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of* GOD, *to improve the Authority* GOD *gives me over others, to the Suppreſſion of Vice, and the Encouragement of Virtue; and ſo for the Exaltation of* GOD's *Name on Earth, and their Souls in Heaven.*

THAT all power and authority hath its original from God, and that one creature is not over another, but by the providence and will of him, who is over all; and ſo, by conſequence, that all the authority we have over men, is to be improved for God, is clear, not only from that queſtion, *Who made thee to differ from another? and, what haſt thou, which thou didſt not receive,* 1 Cor. iv. 7. but likewiſe, and that more clearly, from that poſitive aſſertion, *the powers that be are ordained of God,* Rom. xiii. 1. That, therefore, I may follow my commiſſion, I muſt ſtick cloſe to my preſent reſolution, even in all the power God gives me, to behave myſelf as one inveſted with that power from above, to reſtrain vice and encourage virtue, as oft as I have an opportunity ſo to do, always looking upon myſelf as one commiſſioned by him, and acting under him. For this reaſon, I muſt ſtill endeavour to exerciſe my authority, as if the moſt high God was in my place in perſon as well as power. I muſt not follow the dictates of my own carnal reaſon, much leſs the humours of my own biaſſed paſſion, but ſtill keep to the acts which God himſelf hath made either in the general ſtatute-book for all the world, the holy ſcriptures, or in the particular laws and ſtatutes of the nation wherein I live.

And queſtionleſs, if I diſcharge this duty as I ought, whatever ſphere of authority I move in, I am capable of doing a great deal of good, not only by my power, but by my influence and example. For common experience teaches us, that even the inclinations and deſires of thoſe that are eminent for their quality or ſtation, are more powerful than the very commands of God himſelf; eſpecially among perſons of an inferior rank, and more ſervile diſpoſition, who are apt to be more wrought upon by the fear of preſent puniſhment, or the loſs of ſome temporal advantage, than any thing that is future or ſpiritual. Hence it is, that all thoſe whom God entruſteth with this precious talent, have a great advantage and opportunity in their hand, for the ſuppreſſing ſin, and the exalting

holineſs in the world: A word from their mouths againſt whoredom, drunkenneſs, and the profanation of the ſabbath, or the like; yea, their very example and ſilent geſtures being able to do more than the threatenings of Almighty God, either pronounced by himſelf in his word, or by his miniſters in his holy ordinances.

This, therefore, is my reſolution, that whatſoever authority the moſt high God ſhall be pleaſed to put upon me, I will look upon it as my duty, and always make it my endeavour, to demoliſh the kingdom of ſin and ſatan, and eſtabliſh that of CHRIST and holineſs in the hearts of all thoſe to whom my commiſſion extends; looking more at the duty God expects from me, than at the dignity he confers upon me. In a word, I will ſo exerciſe the power and authority God puts into my hands here, that when the particular circuit of my life is ended, and I ſhall be brought to the general aſſize to give an account of this among my other talents, I may give it up with joy; and ſo exchange my temporal authority upon earth, for an eternal crown of glory in heaven.

## RESOLUTION IV.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to improve the Affections GOD ſtirs up in others towards me, to the ſtirring up of their Affections towards God.*

IF the authority I have over others, then queſtionleſs the affection others have to me, is to be improved for God; and that becauſe the affection they bear to me in a natural ſenſe hath a kind of authority in me over them in a ſpiritual one. And this I gather from my own experience; for I find none to have a greater command over me, than they that manifeſt the greateſt affections for me. Indeed, it is a truth generally agreed on, that a real and ſincere eſteem for any perſon is always attended with a fear of diſpleaſing that perſon; and where there is fear in the ſubject, there will, doubtleſs, be authority in the object; becauſe fear is the ground of authority, as love is, or ought to be, the ground of that fear. The greateſt potentate, if not feared, will not be obeyed; if his ſubjects ſtand in no awe of him, he can never ſtrike any awe upon them. Nor will that awe have its proper effects in curbing and reſtraining them from ſin and diſobedience, unleſs it proceeds from, and is joined with love.

I know the ſcripture tells me, *There is no fear in love, but that perfect love caſteth out fear*, 1 John iv. 18. But that is to be underſtood of our love to God, not to men, and that a perfect love to, ſuch as can only be exerciſed in Heaven. There, I know, our love will be conſummate, without mixture, as well as without defect; there will be a perfect expreſſion of love on both ſides, and ſo no fear of diſpleaſure on either. But this is a happineſs which is not to be expected here on earth; ſo long as we are clothed with fleſh and blood, we ſhall, in one degree or other, be ſtill under the influence of our paſſions and affections. And therefore as there is no perſon we can love upon earth, but who may ſometimes ſee occaſion to be diſpleaſed with us; ſo he will always, upon this account, be feared by us. This I look upon as the chief occaſion of one man's having ſo much power and influence over another.

But how comes this under the notion of a talent received from God, and ſo to be improved for him? Why, becauſe it is he, and he alone, that kindles and blows up the ſparks of pure love and affection in us, and that by the breathings of his own ſpirit. It was the LORD that gave Joſeph favour in the ſight of the *keeper of the priſon*, Gen xxxix. 21. And who brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the *prince of the eunuchs*, Dan. i. 9. And ſo of all others in the world: For were are told elſewhere, that as *GOD faſhioneth the hearts of men, ſo he turneth them which way ſoever he will.* Inſomuch that I can never ſee any expreſs their love to me, but I muſt expreſs my thankfulneſs to God for it; nor can I feel in myſelf any warmth of affection towards others, without conſidering it as a talent hid in my breaſt, which I am obliged in duty to improve for him by ſtirring up their affections unto him whoſe affections himſelf hath ſtirred up towards me. And this will be the more eaſy to effect, if I take care, in the firſt place, to expreſs the zeal and ſincerity of my own love to God, by making him the chief object of my eſteem and adoration; and manifeſt my averſion to the ſins they are guilty of, by repreſenting them as moſt loathſome and abominable, as well as moſt dangerous and damnable. For, wherever there is a true and cordial affection to any perſon, it is apt to biaſs thoſe that are under the influence of it, to chuſe the ſame objects for their love or averſion, that ſuch a perſon does, *i. e.* to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates. This, therefore, is the firſt thing to be done, to ſtir up the affections of others to love and ſerve God.

Another way of my improving the affections of others to this end, is by ſetting them a good example; for commonly what a friend doth, be it good or bad, is pleaſing to us, becauſe we look not at the goodneſs of the thing that is done, but at the lovelineſs of the perſon that doth it. And if the vices of a friend ſeem amiable, how much more will their virtues ſhine? For this reaſon, therefore, whenſoever I perceive any perſon to ſhew a reſpect for, or affection to, me, I ſhall always look upon it as an opportunity put into my hands to ſerve and glorify my great Creator, and ſhall look upon it as a call from heaven, as much as if I heard the Almighty ſay to me, I deſire to have this perſon love me, and therefore have I made him to love thee; do thou but ſet before him an example of goodneſs and virtue, and his love to thy perſon ſhall induce and engage him to direct his actions according to it. This, therefore, is the rule that I fully reſolve to guide myſelf by, with relation to thoſe who are pleaſed to allow me a ſhare in their eſteem and affection, which I hope to improve to their advantage in the end: That as they love me, and I love them now, ſo we may all love God, and God love us to all eternity.

## RESOLUTION V.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to improve every good Thought to the producing of good Affections in myſelf, and as good Actions with reſpect to GOD.*

WHATSOEVER comes from God, being a talent to be improved to him, I cannot but think good thoughts to be as precious talents, as 'tis poſſible a creature can be bleſſed with. But let me eſteem them as I will, I am ſure my maſter will reckon them amongſt the talents he entruſts me with, and will call me to an account for; and, therefore, I ought not to neglect them. The ſcripture tells me, *I am not ſufficient of myſelf to think any thing, as of myſelf, but that my ſufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. And if I be not ſufficient to think any thing, much leſs am I able of myſelf to think of that which is good; foraſmuch as to good thoughts there muſt always be ſuppoſed a ſpecial concurrence of God's Spirit; whereas to other thoughts there is only the general concurrence of his preſence. Seeing, therefore, they come from God, how muſt I lay them out for him? Why, by

ſublimating good thoughts unto good affections. Does God vouchſafe to ſend down into my heart a thought of himſelf? I am to ſend up this thought to him again, in the fiery chariot of love, deſire, and joy. Doth he dart into my ſoul a thought of holineſs and purity? I am to dwell and meditate upon it till it break out into a flame of love and affection for him. Doth he raiſe up in my ſpirit a thought of ſin, and ſhew me the uglineſs and deformity of it? I muſt let it work its deſired effect, by making it as loathſome and deteſtable as that thought repreſents it to be.

But good thoughts muſt not only be improved to produce good affections in my heart, but likewiſe good actions in my life. So that the thoughts of God ſhould not only make me more taken with his beauty, but more active for his glory; and the thoughts of ſin ſhould not only damp my affection to it, but likewiſe deter and reſtrain me from the commiſſion of it.

And thus every good thought that God puts into my heart, inſtead of ſlipping out, as it does with ſome others without regard, will be cheriſhed and improved to the producing of good actions: Theſe actions will entitle me to the bleſſing of God, and that to the kingdom of glory.

## RESOLUTION VI.

*I am reſolved, by the Grace of GOD, to improve every Affliction GOD lays upon me, as an Earneſt or Token of his Affection towards me.*

EVERY thing that flows from God to his ſervants, coming under the notion of talents, to be improved for himſelf, I am ſure afflictions, as well as other mercies, muſt needs be reckoned amongſt thoſe talents God is pleaſed to vouchſafe. Indeed it is a talent, without which I ſhould be apt to forget the improvement of all the reſt; and which, if well improved, itſelf will *work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor iv. 7. 'Tis the non-improvement of an affliction that makes it a curſe; whereas, if improved, it is as great a bleſſing as any God is pleaſed to ſcatter amongſt the children of men. And therefore it is, that God moſt frequently entruſteth this precious talent with his own peculiar people; *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I puniſh you for your iniquities*, A-

mos iii: 2. Thoſe that God knows the beſt, with them will he entruſt the moſt, if not of other talents, yet be ſure of this, which is ſo uſeful and neceſſary to bring us to the knowledge of ourſelves and our Creator, that without it we ſhould be apt to forget both.

It is this that ſhews us the folly and pride of preſumption, as well as the vanity and emptineſs of all worldly enjoyments; and deters us from incenſing and provoking him, from whom all our happineſs as well as our afflictions, flow: Let, therefore, what croſſes or calamities ſoever befal me, I am ſtill reſolved to bear them all, not only with a patient reſignation to the divine will, but even to comfort and rejoice myſelf in them, as the greateſt bleſſings. For inſtance, am I ſeized with pain and ſickneſs? I ſhall look upon it as a meſſage from God, ſent on purpoſe to put me in mind of death, and to convince me of the neceſſity of being always prepared for it by a good life, which a ſtate of uninterrupted health is apt to make us unmindful of. Do I ſuſtain any loſſes or croſſes? The true uſe of this is, to make me ſenſible of the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of this world's bleſſings, which we can no ſooner caſt our eye upon, but they immediately *take to themſelves wings, and fly away* from us. And ſo, all other afflictions God ſees fit to lay upon me, may in like manner be, ſome way or other, improved for my happineſs.

But, beſides the particular improvements of particular chaſtiſements, the general improvement of all is the increaſing of my love and affection to that God, who brings theſe afflictions upon me. For how runs the mittimus, whereby he is pleaſed to ſend me to the dungeon of *afflictions? Deliver ſuch a one to Satan to be buffetted* in the fleſh: *that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus*, 1 Cor. v. 5. By this it appears, that the furnace of afflictions, which God is pleaſed at any time to throw me into, is not heated at the fire of his wrath, but at the flames of his affection to me. The conſideration whereof, as it ſhould more inflame my love to him, ſo ſhall it likewiſe engage me to expreſs a greater degree of gratitude towards him, when he ſingles me out, not only to ſuffer from him, but for him too. For this is an honour indeed peculiar to the ſaints of God, which if he ſhould be pleaſed ever to prefer me to, I ſhall look upon it as upon other afflictions, to be improved for his glory, the good of others, and the everlaſting comfort of my own ſoul.

Thus have I reckoned up the talents God hath, or may put into my hands, to be improved for his glory. May the ſame

divine being that entruſted me with them, and inſpired me with theſe good reſolutions concerning them, enable me, by his grace, to make a due uſe of them, and carefully to put in practice what I have thus religiouſly reſolved upon.

There are ſome other mercies, which might be ſet down in the catalogue of talents, as the graces and motions of God's holy ſpirit, and the uſe of his holy ordinances, under the miniſtry of the goſpel; but theſe being included and inſiſted on, under ſeveral of the foregoing heads, will not require a diſtinct conſideration.

*FINIS.*

# PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON A

# CHRISTIAN LIFE:

OR, NECESSARY

# DIRECTIONS

For its BEGINNING and PROGRESS upon

# EARTH,

In order to its final PERFECTION in the BEATIFICK VISION.

THE TWENTY-FIRST EDITION.

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## PART II.

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By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.
Late Lord Biſhop of St. ASAPH.

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# THE

# PREFACE.

THE kind reception which has been given to all the other works of this incomparable author, particularly to his private thoughts, written in his younger years, has encouraged the publiſhing of another volume of his thoughts, upon ſubjects of the moſt importance to the Chriſtian life, in all the chief ſcenes of it; and thoſe compoſed when age and experience in the courſe of his parochial miniſtry had taught him, what directions were moſt neceſſary for the conduct of every diſciple of Chriſt, thro' all the ſtages of *that race that is ſet before us*, that he *may ſo run that he may obtain.* Accordingly, the reader is here furniſhed, not only with ſuch inſtructions, as are moſt proper for the entrance upon this race, and the early diſcipline of thoſe who are new liſted under Chriſt's banners, but alſo with ſuch other points both of faith and practice, as are moſt fit to be afterwards inculcated and preſſed upon them, for their ſucceſsful carrying on of this holy warfare, and finiſhing their courſe, ſo as at laſt to attain the crown of righteouſneſs, laid up for all thoſe that continue Chriſt's *faithful ſoldiers and ſervants to their lives end.*

And as in his private thoughts and reſolutions, this excellent biſhop ſeems chiefly to have aimed at ſettling his own principles, and regulating his practice, as became a follower of the holy Jeſus, and a miniſter of his goſpel: So in theſe which are more public, he carries on the ſame pious deſign with reſpect to others, and executes that ſacred office, for

which thoſe were to prepare him. Indeed, great and indefatigable as his labours were (for few ever laboured more) the end of them was always *the ſalvation of ſouls*. And as the ſpirit of piety which runs through all his writings, together with his plain, unaffected, familiar, and yet ſolid way of argument and perſuaſion, are both admirably adapted to this great end; (to ſay nothing of all his other daily and unwearied pains in the miniſtry while living) ſo, thro' God's great bleſſing upon his endeavours, they were then, and have been ſince crowned with great ſucceſs; and it is the hopes and prayers of all good men, that they may continue ſo to the end of the world, and daily add to our holineſs and his happineſs.

Among many inſtances that might be given of this happy ſucceſs, I have now one before me in a relation of the behaviour of one of this vigilant paſtor's flock, in his laſt ſickneſs, as it is atteſted by an eye-witneſs of it. I will not trouble the reader with the particulars; the ſum is, that this pious gentleman, with his laſt breath, expreſſed ſo much reſignation to God's will, and ſo little fear of death, ſuch comfort in reflecting upon the better part of his life, eſpecially his charity to the poor; and ſo much zeal in recommending that duty to thoſe about him; and above all ſuch an anticipation of thoſe extaſies of joy and happineſs which he was going to in another world, and ſo uncommon and enlarged an underſtanding of the great myſteries of religion; that if, in the midſt of theſe holy raptures, he had not owned his great obligations to Dr. Beveridge for theſe ſpiritual bleſſings, yet we might have eaſily judged, that ſo great a proficient in the ſchool of religion could be indebted, under God, to the care and inſtruction of no leſs a maſter for ſuch extraordinary acquirements.

And, with reſpect to that good, which it is piouſly hoped this great prelate's works have done ſince his death, and may continue to do daily, it has been obſerved by ſome perſons, that ſince the publication of them, our churches have been generally fuller than they uſed to be; to which, as nothing would contribute more, than that ſpirit of devotion and true piety, which, in all his practical writings, this holy man both expreſſes himſelf and labours to create in others: So, if after all theſe pious endeavours to cultivate and promote it in the world, we are ſenſible of the leaſt growth of it, I know not why we may not aſcribe ſo good an effect to the bleſſing of God upon ſo probable a cauſe.

However, if the piety of ſome among us, which we hope increaſeth, be not a ſufficient argument of a probable increaſe of true religion, to be expected from the influence of this great man's works, yet I am ſorry to ſay, that the wickedneſs of others does abundantly make up that defect; I mean the reſtleſs endeavours of all the enemies of God and religion, to diſcredit and defame them; if by any means they could be able to ward ſuch a blow to the kingdom of darkneſs, as they ſeem to apprehend from his pious labours. And what wonder if thoſe who mock God, and would bring religion itſelf into contempt, uſe their utmoſt endeavours to blaſt the reputation of an author, whoſe writings are ſo eminently ſerviceable to religion, and tend ſo much to advance the glory of God? all their attempts of this nature, are ſo many arguments of the excellency of what they would decry; they are the teſtimonies even of enemies, in behalf of thoſe admirable books, which they pretend to ridicule; and all the ſcorn and contempt they expreſs upon this occaſion, reflects more honour upon biſhop Beveridge and his works, I had almoſt ſaid even than the approbation and eſteem of all his and religion's friends. So much good does God in his infinite wiſdom and mercy produce out of the greateſt evil, by turning all the wit and malice of theſe reprobates againſt themſelves, and making them, even againſt their own wills, inſtruments of ſounding forth the praiſes of this excellent writer, at the ſame time, and by the very ſame means, that they vainly attempt to diſhonour and reproach him; as the devils themſelves were forced to own our bleſſed Saviour, though they knew he came on purpoſe to deſtroy them. It were only to be wiſhed, that in this, as in moſt other inſtances, thoſe *children of this world* were not in their generation ſo much *wiſer than the children of light*. It is true, we may as well fear, that dogs ſhould bark out the moon, as that the utmoſt malice of theſe enemies to truth, ſhall ever be able to ſully a reputation, that has long ſhined with ſo much brightneſs, among all learned and good men, both at home and abroad, inſomuch, that when this illuſtrious prelate was a dying, one of the chief of his order deſervedly ſaid of him, *there goes one of the greateſt and beſt men England ever bred*. No, we have ſeen all their attempts againſt him do but add luſtre to his fame: However, it cannot be leſs the intereſt of religion to promote the works of ſo able a divine, than it is that of atheiſm and irreligion to oppoſe them; and if all good men would ſhew as much zeal in the defence

of them and their great author, and be as induſtrious to recommend both his writings and example, as atheiſts and libertines are to obſtruct the influence of both, this would ſtill be another addition to the glory of ſo great a name; and the good effects we might hope for, on the lives of men, from ſuch excellent books, diſperſed into many hands, would be at once the beſt atteſtation that could be given to the wondrous benefit and uſefulneſs of them, and alſo the effectual means to ſtop the mouths of gainſayers, by leſſening the number of them daily, and bringing them over from infidelity and atheiſm, to the cauſe of God and religion.

And I connot cloſe this preface better, than with earneſt prayers to God, that this and all other works of Biſhop Beveridge may have that bleſſed effect; and that in return to all the malice of thoſe, who ſeem to envy us the great good we may hope for from ſuch pious and inſtructive diſcourſes, they may by degrees inſtil, even into their breaſts, ſome of that ſpirit of piety, diffuſed through every page; and of atheiſts and libertines, make them ſober men, and Chriſtians.

# THOUGHTS

## UPON

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

IF the principles of the Chriſtian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce! the earth would put on another face, bearing ſome reſemblance to heaven itſelf: Idolatry, with all ſorts of wickedneſs and vice, would be every-where diſcountenanced and ſuppreſſed; for all would worſhip the one living and true God, and him only: There would be no more wars, nor rumours of wars; kingdom would not riſe againſt kingdom, nor nation againſt nation, but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their ſubjects at unity among themſelves, ſtriving about nothing but which ſhould ſerve God beſt, and do moſt good in the world. Then piety, and juſtice, and charity, would revive and flouriſh again all the world over, and particularly in the church and kingdom to which we belong. Then the prayers would be read twice a day in every pariſh as the law requires, and all people would heartily join together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the world. Then all that are of riper years would, at leaſt, every Lord's day, celebrate the memory of the death of Chriſt, by which their ſins are expiated, and the moſt high God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father: And as all ſorts of people would thus continually worſhip God in his own

houſe, ſo whereſoever they are, they would do all they could to ſerve and honour him; *whether they eat or drink, or whatſoever they do*, they would *do all to his glory*. And as for their fellow-ſervants, they would all love as brethren, and every one ſeek another's good as well as their own: *Whatſoever they would that men ſhould do to them*, they would do the ſame to all other men. In ſhort, all would then deny *ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, and ſo walk hand and hand together in the *narrow way that leads to everlaſting life*. This would be the happy ſtate of all mankind, if they were but well grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.

But not to ſpeak of other peoyle, we of this nation rarely find any ſuch effect of this religion among ourſelves; tho' it be as generally profeſſed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any nation, there are but few that are ever the better for it; the moſt being here alſo as bad both in their principles and practices, as they which live in the darkeſt corners of the earth, where the light of the goſpel never yet ſhined: Tho' the kingdom in general be Chriſtian, there are many Heathens in it, people that never were chriſtened; many that were once chriſtened, and are now turned Heathens again, living as *without God in the world*: Many that would ſtill be thought Chriſtians, and yet have apoſtatiſed ſo far as to lay aſide both the ſacraments which Chriſt ordained, and every thing elſe that can ſhew them to be ſo: Many that privily bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and ſo bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction: Many that follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the *way of truth is evil-ſpoken of, and through covetouſneſs, with feigned words, make merchandiſe of men*, as *St. Peter* foretold, 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, 3. *Many who will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears*; and ſo fulfil the propheſy of *St. Paul*, 2 *Tim.* iv. 3. And of thoſe who ſtill continue in the communion of the church, and in the outward profeſſion of the true Chriſtian faith, *There are many, who although they profeſs to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate*, Titus i. 16. Many did I ſay? I wiſh I could not ſay almoſt all: But, alas! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vaſt company of people that are called Chriſtians in this kingdom, how few are they that live as becom-

eth the goſpel of Chriſt? That finiſh the work that God has given them to do, even glorify him in the world? How many that refuſe or neglect to worſhip and ſerve him upon his own day? How few that do it upon any other day, when they have any thing elſe to do? How many that never receive the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper in their whole lives? How few that receive it above two or three times in the year, how often ſoever they are invited to it? How many are the proud, the paſſionate, the covetous, the intemperate, the incontinent, the unjuſt, the profane and impious, in compariſon of the humble and meek, and liberal, and ſober and modeſt, and righteous and holy among us? The diſproportion is ſo vaſtly great, that none but God himſelf can make the compariſon: So little of Chriſtianity is now to be found among Chriſtians themſelves; to our ſhame be it ſpoken.

It is indeed a matter of ſo much ſhame as well as grief, to all that have any regard for the honour of Chriſt their Saviour, that they cannot but be very ſolicitous to know how it comes to paſs that his doctrine and precepts are ſo generally ſlighted and neglected as they are in our days? and how they may be obſerved better for the future than now they are? Both which queſtions may be eaſily reſolved; for we cannot wonder that of the many which profeſs the Chriſtian religion, there are ſo few that live up to it, when we conſider how few are duly inſtructed in the firſt principles of it.

The religion which Chriſt hath revealed to the world, is, by his grace and bleſſing, ſettled and eſtabliſhed among us, ſo as to be made the religion of the kingdom in general: And therefore all that are born in it, are, or ought to be, according to his order or inſtitution, ſoon after baptized, and ſo made his diſciples, or Chriſtians by profeſſion. And the church takes ſecurity of thoſe who thus bring a child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it ſhall be inſtructed in the catechiſm which ſhe for that purpoſe hath ſet forth, containing all the principles of that religion into which it was baptized. But notwithſtanding this hath been neglected for many years, whereby it is come to paſs that the far greateſt part of the people in this kingdom know little or nothing of the religion they profeſs, but only to profeſs it as the religion of the country where they live; they may perhaps be very zealous for it, as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their lives

according to it, becauſe they were never rightly informed about it; or, at leaſt, not ſoon enough, before error or ſin hath got poſſeſſion of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always *as children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 4. And whatſoever ſin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal bodies, ſo that they obey it in the luſts thereof, in the ſpite of all that can be ſaid to them out of God's own word; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the foundation is not firſt laid, upon which they ſhould build up themſelves in that moſt holy faith that is preached to them. The word they hear, is a *ſeed that falls by the way ſide*, or *upon a rock*, or elſe *among thorns*, and ſo never comes to perfection; their hearts not being prepared before-hand, and rightly diſpoſed for it, by having the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt firſt infuſed into them.

This therefore being the great cauſe of that ſhameful decay of the Chriſtian religion that is ſo viſible among us, we can never expect to ſee it repaired, unleſs the great duty of catechiſing be revived, and the laws that are made about it, be ſtrictly obſerved all the kingdom over; as moſt certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the laws both of the church and ſtate under which we live, but likewiſe for that they are grounded upon the word of God himſelf, who expreſly commands the ſame thing by his apoſtle, ſaying, *Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

For here by nurture, we are to underſtand, as the Greek word *paideia* ſignifies, that diſcipline which parents ought to exerciſe over their children, to prevent their falling into, or continuing in any wicked courſe. And by the admonition of the Lord, is meant the catechiſing, or putting them in mind of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of what he would have them believe and do that they may be ſaved. For the original word, *nouthe ſia*, which we tranſlate Admonition, properly ſignifies Catechiſing. (*Catechiſein Nouthetein*, Heſych.) And therefore to catechiſe or inſtruct children in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is a duty here laid upon all parents by almighty God himſelf; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord, by catechiſing or teaching them the principles of his religion, they all live in a breach of plain law, a law

made by the Supreme Lawgiver of the world, and muſt accordingly anſwer for it at the laſt day.

Wherefore all that are ſenſible of the great account which they muſt give of all their actions, at that time, to the Judge of the whole world, cannot but make as much conſcience of this as of any duty whatſoever, ſo as to uſe the utmoſt of their care and diligence, that their children may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo be wiſe unto ſalvation. Neither is this any hard matter for thoſe to do, who live in the communion of the church, having ſuch a catechiſm or ſummary of the Chriſtian religion drawn up to their hands, which is eaſy both for parents to teach, and for children to learn: And yet ſo full and comprehenſive, that it contains all things neceſſary for any man to know in order to his being ſaved. As you may clearly ſee if you do but caſt your eye upon the methods and contents of it; which may be all reduced to theſe five heads, the *baptiſmal vow*, *the apoſtles creed*, *the ten commandments*, *the Lord's prayer*, and the doctrine of the ſacraments ordained by our Lord Chriſt.

It begins where a child begins to be a Chriſtian, and therefore hath a Chriſtian name given him, even at his baptiſm, *wherein he was made a member of Chriſt*, *a child of God*, *and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*. Which great privileges belong to all that are baptized, and to none elſe; none elſe being in the number of Chriſt's diſciples; for our Lord Chriſt, a little before his aſcenſion into heaven, left orders with his apoſtles, and in them with all that ſhould ſucceed in his miniſtry of the church to the end of the world, to make all nations his diſciples, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father*, *Son*, *and Holy Ghoſt*, as the original words plainly import, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. And therefore as people of all nations are capable of being made his diſciples; ſo none now are, or ever can be made ſo any other way, than by being baptized according to his order. But they who are not thus made his diſciples by being *baptized unto him*, are not the members of Chriſt; and if they be not the members of Chriſt, they cannot be the children of God, nor have any right to the kingdom of heaven, that being promiſed only to ſuch as believe and are baptized, *Mark* xvi. 16. And our Saviour himſelf elſewhere alſo ſaith, *That except a man be born again of water*, *and of the Spirit*, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. Whereby we may perceive the great neceſſity of this ſacrament, where it may be had, as our church

obſerves, in her office for the miniſtration of it, to ſuch as are of riper years.

It is to be farther obſerved, that when our Saviour ordained baptiſm to be the means of admitting perſons into his church, or the congregation of his diſciples, leſt we ſhould think, as ſome have done, that he meant it only of thoſe who are of riper years, he uſed the moſt general terms that could be invented, requiring that all nations ſhould be baptized; and if all nations, then children alſo, which are a great, if not the greateſt part of every nation. And accordingly his church hath always baptized children as well as adult perſons: When any who are come to years of diſcretion, were willing and deſirous to become Chriſt's diſciples, that they might learn of him the way to heaven, they were made ſo by being baptized; and if they had children, they were allſo baptized at the ſame time with their parents; and ſo were the children which were afterwards born to them; they alſo were baptized ſoon after they were born: And that it is our Saviour's pleaſure that children alſo ſhould be brought into his church, appears likewiſe in that when his diſciples rebuked thoſe who brought children unto him, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, *ſuffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of God*, Mark x. 14.

But ſeeing they who are thus baptized according to the inſtitution of Chriſt are thereby made his diſciples, and in him the children of God, it is neceſſary they ſhould then promiſe to believe and live from that time forward, according as he hath commanded; which promiſe therefore all that are grown up always uſe to make every one in his own perſon, and for that purpoſe were and ought to be catechiſed before-hand, and put in mind of what they were to promiſe when they were baptized; and therefore were called Catechumens. But children not being capable of making any ſuch promiſe themſelves, in their own perſons, they were always admitted, and required to do it by their guardians, that is by their Godfathers and Godmothers, which brought and offered them to be baptized; and are therefore obliged to take care that they be afterwards catechiſed or inſtructed in the principles of that religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the promiſe which they then made of framing their lives according to it.

This promiſe, therefore, which children make at their baptiſm by their ſureties, and which is implied in the very nature

of the ſacrament, whether they have any ſureties or no, conſiſts of three general heads:

Firſt, *That they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.*

Secondly, *That they will believe all the articles of the Chriſtian faith.*

Thirdly, *That they will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of their life.*

Which three things, under which the whole ſubſtance of the Chriſtian religion is contained, being all promiſed by children when they are baptized into it, it is abſolutely neceſſary that they be afterwards put in mind, ſo ſoon as they are capable of the promiſe, which they then made, and of the obligation which lies upon them to perform it: For otherwiſe it can never be expected that they ſhould either do, or ſo much as know it; whereas the inſtructing them in this, the firſt part of the catechiſm, will prepare and diſpoſe them for the underſtanding all the reſt.

Particularly the Apoſtles creed, which is next taught them, containing all thoſe articles of the Chriſtian faith, which they promiſed to believe, and nothing elſe, nothing but what is grounded upon plain texts of ſcripture, and hath always been believed by the whole catholick church in all ages and places all the world over: Here are none of thoſe private opinions and controverted points which have ſo long diſturbed the church, and ſerve only to perplex mens minds, and take them off from the more ſubſtantial and neceſſary duties of religion, as we have found by woeful experience, which our church hath taken all poſſible care to prevent, by inſerting no other articles of faith into the catechiſm which her members are to learn, than what are contained in this creed received and approved of by the whole Chriſtian world; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to *believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt*, in whoſe name they were chriſtened, and therefore muſt continue in this faith, or ceaſe to be Chriſtians.

The other thing which they, who are baptized, promiſe is, *That they will keep God's commandments*, which therefore are next taught in the catechiſm, without any mixture of human

inventions or conſtitutions: Thoſe ten commandments which the ſupreme Lawgiver himſelf proclaimed upon mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own finger upon two tables of ſtone. Theſe they are all bound to learn, becauſe they are bound to keep them all, as they will anſwer it at the laſt day, when all mankind ſhall be judged by them.

But no man can keep theſe commandments without God's ſpecial grace, which we have no ground to expect without praying to him for it. And therefore children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that for which Chriſt himſelf compoſed, and commanded us to ſay, whenſoever we pray, *Luke* xi. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apoſtles creed, believes all that he need believe, and he that keeps all the ten commandments, doth all that he need to do; ſo he that prays this prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: ſo that in this ſhort catechiſm, which children of five years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The laſt part of the catechiſm is concerning the two ſacraments which Chriſt hath ordained in his church, as *generally neceſſary to ſalvation*; that is to ſay, Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper: Both which our church hath there explained with ſuch extraordinary prudence and caution, as to take in all that is neceſſary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the diſputes that have been raiſed about them, to the great prejudice of the Chriſtian religion.

Seeing therefore this catechiſm is ſo full, that it contains all that any man needs to know, and yet ſo ſhort, that a child may learn it: I do not ſee how parents may bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, better than by inſtructing them in it. I do not ſay by teaching them only to ſay it by rote, but by inſtructing them in it, ſo that they may underſtand, as ſoon and as far as they are capable, the true ſenſe and meaning of all the words and phraſes in every part of it; for which purpoſe it will be neceſſary to obſerve theſe rules.

*Firſt*, You muſt begin betime, before your children have got any ill habits, which may be eaſily prevented, but are not eaſily cured. When children are baptized, being *born again of water, and of the Spirit*, as the guilt of their original ſin is waſhed away in the *laver of regeneration*, ſo that it will never be imputed to them, unleſs it break out afterwards in actual tranſgreſſions; ſo they receive alſo the Spirit of God

to prevent all ſuch eruptions, by enabling them to reſiſt the *temptations of the world, the fleſh, and the devil*, to believe and ſerve God according as they then promiſed; ſo far at leaſt, that *ſin ſhall not have dominion over them, that they ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof, ſeeing now they are not under the law, but under the grace of Chriſt*, Rom. vi. 12, 14. But that the ſeeds of grace which were then ſown in their hearts, may not be loſt, or ſtifled, but grow up to perfection, great care muſt be taken that they may be taught, ſo ſoon as they are capable to diſcern between good and evil, to avoid the evil and do the good, and to believe and live as they promiſed, when they were endued with grace to do it. *Haſt thou children?* ſaith the ſon of Sirach, *inſtruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth*, Eccl. viii. 23. Give thy ſon no liberty in his youth, nor wink not at his follies. *Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the ſides while he is a child, leſt he wax ſtubborn and be diſobedient unto thee, and ſo bring ſorrow to thine heart*, Chap. xxx. 11, 12. Whereas *he that gathereth inſtruction from his youth, ſhall find wiſdom till his old age*, Chap. vi. 18. According to that of the wiſe man, *Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. As *Timothy from a child* had known the *holy ſcriptures*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And that was the reaſon that he was ſo expert in them when he became a man: Which therefore that your children may alſo be, the firſt thing they learn muſt be their catechiſm, where they are taught all the great truths and duties that are revealed in the holy ſcripture, as neceſſary to ſalvation.

But how can ſuch perſons do this, that cannot read, nor ſay the catechiſm themſelves? This, I fear, is the caſe of too many among us. There are many who having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or ſcorn to learn it afterwards, and ſo loſe all the benefit and comfort which they might receive by reading the holy ſcriptures: But this, I confeſs, is not ſo neceſſary, eſpecially in our church, where the holy ſcriptures are ſo conſtantly read in public, that, if people would as conſtantly come and hearken to them, they might be wiſe unto ſalvation, although they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at leaſt in the primitive times, when notwithſtanding they attained to the knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, as well as if they had been the greateſt ſcholars in the world. But then conſidering that they could not read, they ſupplied that defect by attending more dili-

gently to what they heard out of God's holy word, and laying it up in their hearts, ſo that they underſtood all the principles of the Chriſtian religion, and were able to inſtruct their children in the ſame as well as if they could read. But this is not our caſe; for now there are many who can neither read, nor ſo much as ſay the catechiſm, having never learned it themſelves, and therefore cannot poſſibly teach it their children. Such as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, who *when, for the time, they ought to be teachers*, they *have need that one teach them again*, which be the firſt principles of the *oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat*, Heb. v. 12. And what muſt ſuch do? They certainly, as they tender their own good, muſt be doubly diligent in the uſe of all means that may tend to their edification and inſtruction: As they deſire the good of their children, they muſt ſend them to ſchool, or provide ſome other perſon to teach them; which if the parents neglect to do, the godfathers and godmothers of every child ſhould put them in mind of it, and ſee that the child be taught, ſo ſoon as he is able to learn, what a ſolemn vow, promiſe, and profeſſion, he made by them at his baptiſm. And, that he may know theſe things the better, they muſt call upon him to hear ſermons; and chiefly they muſt provide that he may learn the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Chriſtian ought to know and believe to his ſoul's health, as they are contained in the church-catechiſm, and then to bring them to the biſhop to be confirmed by him.

But for that purpoſe, when children have been taught the catechiſm, they muſt be ſent to the miniſter or curate of the pariſh where they live, that he may examine and inſtruct them in it: Examine them whether they can ſay it, and inſtruct them ſo as to underſtand it. For though the words be all as plain as they can be well made, yet the things ſignified by thoſe words, are many of them ſo high, that it cannot be expected that children ſhould reach and apprehend them without help, which therefore they muſt go to their miniſter for, whoſe duty and office it is to acquaint them with the full ſenſe and meaning of every word, what is ſignified by it, and what ground they have to believe it is God's holy word. But to do this to any purpoſe, requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our days. And that is one great reaſon there are ſo few among us that are built up as they ought to be, *in their moſt holy faith*. Many refuſe or neglect to

ſend their children to be catechiſed at all; and they who ſend them, ſend them ſo little, and for ſo little a time, that it is impoſſible they ſhould be much the better for it; as many have found by experience; who altho' in their childhood they were taught the catechiſm, and could ſay it readily, yet having not been ſufficiently inſtructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and know no more than if they had never learned. I wiſh this be not the caſe of too many parents: Wherefore, that this great work may be done effectually, ſo as to anſwer its end, as children ſhould begin as ſoon as ever they are able to learn the catechiſm, and go on by degrees till they can ſay it perfectly by heart; ſo when they can do that, they are ſtill to continue to be inſtructed in it all along, till they underſtand it ſo well, as to be fit to receive the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, which uſually may be about ſixteen or ſeventeen years of age, more or leſs, according to their ſeveral capacities. By this means, as they grow in years, they would grow alſo in grace, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Peter iii. 18. This likewiſe would be a great encouragement to the miniſter to take pains with them, when they are ſuch as can underſtand what he ſaith to them, and will continue under his care and conduct until they are ſettled and grounded in the faith, and have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern between *good and evil*; and ſo ſhall be every way qualified to ſerve God, and do their duty to him *in that ſtate of life to which he ſhall be pleaſed* afterwards *to call them*, upon earth, and then to go to heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the kingdom, that all children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully inſtructed in the knowledge of Chriſt, and of that religion which he hath revealed to the world, till they are fit for the holy communion, and ready to engage in the affairs of the world, the next generation would be much better than this, and Chriſtianity would then begin to flouriſh again, and appear in its native beauty and luſtre. And verily, whatſoever ſome may think, ſuch eſpecially as were never catechiſed themſelves, this is as great and neceſſary a duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God himſelf by his Apoſtle expreſly commands all parents to bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*; that is, as I have ſhewed, to catechiſe or inſtruct them in the principles of the doctrine of our Lord Chriſt. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known law, yea,

of many laws. There being many places in God's holy word, where the ſame thing is commanded in other terms by Almighty God himſelf, ſaying, *Theſe words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently to thy children*, Deut. vi. 7. And again, *Therefore ſhall ye lay up theſe words in your heart, and in your ſoul, and bind them for a ſign upon your head, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye ſhall teach them your children*, chap. xi. 18, 19. ſo alſo, *chap.* iv. 10. This is that which he commands alſo by the wiſe man, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. The word in the original which we tranſlate, *train up*, ſignifies alſo to dedicate or devote a child to the ſervice of God, by inſtructing him how to do it, and exerciſing him continually in it; and therefore, in the margin of our Bibles, it is tranſlated catechiſe a child; ſo that we have here both the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of this duty: The neceſſity, in that it is commanded to *train up*, or catechiſe a child in the ways of God: And the uſefulneſs, in that what a child is thus taught, will remain with him all his life-long.

Seeing therefore that God hath laid ſo ſtrict a command upon all parents, to bring up their children in the knowledge of himſelf, and of their duty to him, they can expect no other, but that he ſhould take particular notice whether they do it or not; and reward or puniſh them accordingly. As we ſee in Abraham, what a ſpecial kindneſs hath God for him on this account? *Shall I hide from him*, ſaith the Lord, *that thing which I do? Seeing* that *Abraham ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.* But why had he ſuch an extraordinary favour for Abraham above all other men? God himſelf gives us the reaſon, ſaying: *For I know that he will command his children and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. This was the reaſon that Abraham was ſo much in favour, that he was called the *friend of God*, Jam. ii. 23.

And how much God is diſpleaſed with parents neglecting to bring up their children in his true faith and fear, and ſuffering them to grow up and go on in a courſe of vice and prophaneneſs, appears ſufficiently from that ſevere judgment which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole houſe for it, ſaying to Samuel, *For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge his houſe for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, becauſe*

*his ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not. And therefore I have ſworn to the houſe of Eli, That the iniquity of Eli's houſe ſhall not be purged with ſacrifice nor offering for ever,* 1 Sam. iii. 13, 14. The execution of which dreadful judgment is left upon record in the holy ſcripture, as a ſtanding monument and caution to all parents, to take heed how they educate their children.

Be ſure the ſaints of God in all ages have taken as much care to bring up their children well, as to live well themſelves; making as much conſcience of this, as of any duty whatſoever which they owe to God. That the children which he hath given them, may anſwer his end in giving them; that they may not be inſignificant cyphers in the world, or as *fruitleſs trees* that ſerve only to cumber the ground; but that they may ſerve and glorify God whilſt they are upon the earth, ſo as to be *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.*

And verily all parents would make this their continual care and ſtudy, if they minded either their own or their childrens good. Many complain, not without cauſe, that their children are diſobedient and undutiful to them; but the cauſe is chiefly in themſelves. When they have neglected their duty to their children, how can they expect their children ſhould perform their duty to them? They were never taught it, how can they do it? If therefore they prove ſtubborn and obſtinate, if they give themſelves up to all manner of vice and wickedneſs; if inſtead of comfort they be a grief and trouble to their parents, their parents muſt blame themſelves for it: And when they come to reflect upon it, their ſin in neglecting their duty to God and their children in their education, will be a greater trouble to them than any their children can give them. Whereas when parents bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," if their children notwithſtanding happen to miſcarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their duty, and have nothing to anſwer upon that account.

But what a mighty advantage would it be to the children themſelves to be thus continually put in mind of their baptiſmal vow, the articles of our faith, the duties of religion, and what elſe is contained in the catechiſm, from their childhood all along till they come to be men or women? Their minds would be then filled with ſuch divine truths, and with ſo great a ſenſe of their duty, that there would be no room left for hereſy or ſin to enter, at leaſt not ſo as to get poſſeſ-

ſion, and exerciſe any dominion there. The firſt impreſſions that are made upon us are not ſoon worn out, but uſually remain as long as we live. As the wiſe man obſerves, "Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he "is old he will not depart from it," *Prov.* xxii. 6. When one hath been all along from his childhood brought up in the knowledge of God, and his holy will, it will ſtick by him ſo, as to be a conſtant check upon him, to keep him within the compaſs of his duty in all ordinary caſes; and if any thing extraordinary happen to draw him aſide, it will make him reſtleſs and uneaſy, till he hath recovered himſelf, and got into the right way again; and ſo it will either keep him innocent, or make him penitent. In ſhort, by the bleſſing of God attending, as it uſually doth, this great duty when it is conſcientiouſly performed, is the beſt means that parents can uſe, whereby to breed up their children for heaven, to make them fellow citizens with ſaints, and of the houſhold of God, both in this world and for ever.

Wherefore if we have any regard either to our own or to our children's eternal welfare, let us ſet upon this duty in good earneſt; let us bring up our children ſo long in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be ſaved. But we muſt be ſure to teach them by our example as well as inſtructions; we muſt not tell them one thing, and do another ourſelves; but ſhew them how to keep the faith and laws of God, by keeping them ourſelves before their eyes, all the while we live together upon earth: That when we are all got one after another, out of this troubleſome and naughty world, we and our children may at laſt meet together in heaven, and there praiſe and glorify Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for his grace and truth in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

After this general inſtruction in the principles of our holy religion, it will be neceſſary, as ſoon as our young Chriſtian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the nature of God, and the great myſtery of the Trinity, unto which we are all baptized, which therefore ſhall be my next ſubject.

## *Thoughts upon the Knowledge of* GOD.

THOUGH religion in general be a thing that all men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that men differ ſo much about, as about the particular acts and exerciſe of it: For all nations in the world have ſome religion; but there are ſcarce two amongſt them all that have the ſame, yea, in one and the ſame nation too there are divers modes of religion profeſſed and practiſed. No nation or country in the world, but will afford us inſtances of this; and our own, I think, as many as any other whatſoever. For could we but caſt our eyes into the ſeveral corners of this land, at this very moment, what variety might we obſerve in thoſe acts which the ſeveral parties amongſt us account to be religious! Some we ſhould ſee ſitting ſilently for a while together, without either ſpeaking, or hearing a word ſpoken, until at length up ſtarts a man or a woman, or ſome ſuch thing, and entertains them with a diſcourſe made up of cenſure and malice, blaſphemy and nonſenſe; and this is all the religion they pretend to. Others we ſhould find crowded together in ſeveral corners, ſometimes praying, ſometimes diſcourſing as it were, ſometimes arguing the caſe with Almighty God, and acquainting him with what happens in the world, and that with as much confidence and malapertneſs, as if he was their fellow-creature, and then very gravely walk home and pleaſe themſelves with a vain conceit that they are more religious than their neighbours. Another ſort of people there are amongſt us, who are as ſuperſtitious as the former were ſlovenly and irreverent in their devotions: For theſe having been ſprinkled with a little holy water, and performed their obeiſance to a crucifix or picture, preſently fall a pattering over Ave Maria's and Pater Noſters to themſelves, as faſt as they can; whilſt the prieſt in the mean while ſays ſomething too, but the people generally do not know what it is, nor indeed what themſelves ſay, it being all in an unknown tongue. But howſoever, though they know not what they ſay, they think that God doth, and therefore ſatisfy themſelves that they have ſaid ſomething, though they know not what, and think that God is well pleaſed with what they have done, becauſe themſelves are ſo.

Others there are, and by the bleſſing of God, far more than all the reſt, in this nation, who preſent themſelves before the great Creator and poſſeſſor of the world, in that ſolemn and reverent manner as the conſtitutions of our church direct, humbly confeſſing their manifold ſins againſt God, begging mercy and pardon from him, imploring his favour, and praiſing his name for all the expreſſions of his undeſerved love to mankind: and all this in our vulgar tongue, that we all underſtand, and ſo perform a reaſonable ſervice unto God.

And verily, if we conſider the inſtitution itſelf, of that religious worſhip which we thus perform, it is certainly the beſt that ever was preſcribed by any church, as being moſt conſonant to the general rules of devotion laid down in the ſcriptures; as alſo moſt conformable to the diſcipline and practice of the primitive church. But we muſt not think that we ſerve God aright, becauſe we be preſent with them that do ſo. I do not doubt but that there are many amongſt us who ſincerely endeavour to worſhip God, whenſoever they preſent themſelves before him in public, I wiſh that all of us would do ſo. But we muſt ſtill remember, that we ſhould ſerve the Lord elſewhere as well as at church, and on all other days as well as upon the Lord's day. And that if we would be truly religious, our whole man muſt be devoted to the ſervice of God, yea, and our whole time too. We muſt not think that it is enough to do ſomething, but we muſt do all things that are required of us; which notwithſtanding we can never do, unleſs we know both that GOD whom we ought to ſerve, and that ſervice which we ought to perform unto him. And therefore David directs his ſon to the right and only way to true religion, ſaying, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. *And thou Solomon, my ſon, know thou the God of thy fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind:* Which words, did we apply them to ourſelves, would, by the bleſſing of God, put us upon ſincere endeavours after real and univerſal obedience to all the commands of God, and perſuade us not to content ourſelves with vain pretences to, and profeſſions of religion, as moſt do; but ſtrive to live up unto our profeſſion, and carry and behave ourſelves ſo as becometh thoſe who deſire to be religious, and to ſerve God in good earneſt; which that we may do, let us obſerve the rule and method which David here preſcribes to his ſon; firſt, to know God, and then to ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

I ſhall not trouble the reader with any critical diviſion of

the words, for they naturally divide themſelves into two parts.

Firſt, that we ſhould know, and then that we ſhould *ſerve God with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.*

I ſhall begin with the firſt, not only becauſe it is firſt placed, but becauſe it neceſſarily muſt precede the ſecond; it being impoſſible for us to ſerve God aright unleſs we knew him: For without this, all our ſervices will be but like the altar which the Athenians dedicated, *To the unknown God.* By which inſcriptions they manifeſted to the world, that they knew that they ought to ſerve ſome God, but they knew not that God whom they ought to ſerve. But that we may ſo know him as to ſerve him aright, I ſhall firſt ſhew what it is of God which we muſt know, in order to our ſerving him right.

Firſt, Therefore he that would ſerve God aright, muſt believe and know that he is, *Heb.* xi. 6. that is, that there is ſuch a ſupreme and all-glorious Being in and over the world that we call God, that made, preſerves, governs, and diſpoſes of every thing in the world, as ſeemeth beſt to him; and that it is not only probable, that there is ſuch a one, but that it is the moſt certain and neceſſary truth in the world; without which there would be no ſuch thing as truth or certainty. For, indeed, if God was not, nothing could be, he alone being the baſis and foundation of all being in the world, yea, and of all motion too, *Acts* xvii. 28. And therefore, *every thing that lives, every thing that moves,* nay, *every thing that is,* argues God to be; which therefore is the firſt great truth, upon which all the reſt depend; without which nothing would be true, much leſs would our ſervices be ſo: So that the firſt thing to be done in order to our ſerving God, is to *know, and believe that he is,* and that he ought to be ſerved and adored by us.

Secondly, it is neceſſary to know his eſſence too, as well as his exiſtence; what, as well as that he is; what he is in himſelf, and what he is to us; that in himſelf he is, in and of himſelf, the ſource of his wiſdom, the abyſs of all power, the ocean of all goodneſs, the fountain of all happineſs, the principle of all motion, and the center, yea, perfection of all perfections in the world; whoſe nature or eſſence is ſo pure, ſo glorious, ſo immenſe, ſo infinite, ſo eternal, ſo every way perfect, tranſcendent, and incomprehenſible, that the more we think of him, the more we contemplate upon him, the more we praiſe and admire him, the more we may. And the higheſt apprehenſions that we can have of him, is ſtill to apprehend him infinitely higher than all our apprehenſions

of him. And therefore, that man beſt knows God, that knows him to be beyond his knowledge, and that knows he can never know him enough.

But we muſt know too what he is to us, even the author and giver of every good thing we have, and who in himſelf is whatſoever we can deſire to make us happy; and therefore it is, that in the Covenant of Grace, when he would aſſure us that we ſhall have all things that we can enjoy, he only promiſes to be *our God*, Heb. viii. 10. which is as much as we can deſire, and indeed as himſelf can promiſe; for in promiſing himſelf, he hath promiſed whatſoever he is, whatſoever he hath, whatſoever he doth, nay, whatſoever he can do, as God. And thus are we to look upon God as the only object of all true happineſs, and the only center wherein all the deſires and inclinations of our ſouls can reſt.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary alſo to know the ſeveral attributes and perfections which he hath revealed of himſelf, in ſcripture; that he is ſo wiſe as to know whatſoever can be known; ſo powerful as to do whatſoever can be done; ſo great and glorious in himſelf, that we have all juſt cauſe to fear him; ſo kind and gracious in his Son, that it is our duty alſo to truſt in him; ſo true, that whatſoever he ſays is true, becauſe he ſaith it; ſo good, that whatſoever he doth is good, becauſe he doth it; ſo juſt, as to puniſh every ſin that is committed, and yet ſo merciful as to pardon every ſinner that repenteth; that he is pure without mixture, infinite without bounds, eternal without beginning, everlaſting without end, and every way perfect without compariſon.

Fourthly, We muſt know alſo the works of God, what he hath done, wherein he hath manifeſted himſelf to us. But what hath God done? Or rather, what hath he not done? It was he that raiſed this ſtately fabric of the world we live in, out of the womb of nothing. It was he that extracted light out of darkneſs, beauty and perfection out of a confuſed chaos. It was he that bedecked the glorious canopy of heaven with thoſe gliſtering ſpangles, the ſtars. It was he that commanded the ſun to run its courſe by day, and the moon to ride her circuit by night about the world, to ſhew the inhabitants thereof the Glory of their all-glorious Maker. It was he that hung the earth upon nothing, and ſpread upon the ſurface of it a curious carpet, embroidered with all manner, not of painted, but real flowers, and plants, and trees. It was he that firſt produced all things out of nothing; and it is he that ſtill preſerves all things in their be-

ing. It is he that ordereth the affairs of kingdoms, manageth the intrigues of ſtate, directeth the events of wars, and diſpoſes of every particular perſon as himſelf ſees good. In a word, whatſoever was ever made in *heaven above* or *in earth beneath*, it is He that made it; and whatſoever is ſtill done in *heaven above* or *in earth beneath*, it is he that doth it; ſo that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by him, as the firſt and univerſal cauſe of all things.

Fifthly, It is neceſſary alſo to know ſo as to believe, that though there is but one God, yet there are three perſons, all and every one of which is that one God. I do not ſay it is neceſſary to underſtand or comprehend this myſtery, for that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the leſs to believe it, becauſe we cannot underſtand it: For there are many other things in divinity; yea, many things in natural philoſophy, and in geometry itſelf, which we cannot underſtand, and yet for all that, both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cauſe have we to believe this, which God himſelf hath aſſerted of himſelf? nay, and beſides that, we have the ſame obligations to ſerve and honour every perſon, as we have to ſerve and honour any one perſon in the ſacred Trinity; our Saviour himſelf hath expreſly told us, *That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John xxv. 23. But that we cannot do, unleſs we believe the Son to be God as well as the Father; and by conſequence, unleſs we acknowledge this fundamental article of our Chriſtian faith, into which we were all baptized.

Secondly, We muſt conſider what kind of knowledge we ought to have of God, in reference to our ſerving him aright.

For we muſt not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that he is wiſe and powerful, great and glorious, true and faithful, good and gracious; theſe things a man may know in general, ſo as to be able to diſcourſe of them, and diſpute for them too, and yet come ſhort of that knowledge which is requiſite to our true ſerving of God: which ſhould be ſuch a knowledge as will not only ſwim in the brain, but ſink down into the heart; whereby a man is poſſeſſed with a due ſenſe of thoſe things he knows, ſo that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be ſo. Thus David, who, in the text, calls upon his ſon to *know the God of his fathers*, intimates elſewhere what knowledge he means; ſaying, *Oh taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. Where we may obſerve, how he

requires our ſpiritual ſenſes to be employed in our knowledge of God, ſo as to ſee that he is good, yea, and taſte it too; that is, feel and experience it in ourſelves; which though it may ſeem a paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real truth, and attain unto it, if we be but careful and conſtant in our meditations upon God, and ſincere in performing our devotions to him, for by theſe means our notions of God will be refined, our conceptions cleared, and our affections, by conſequence, ſo moved towards him, that we ſhall taſte and experience in ourſelves, as well as know from others, that he is good, and that all perfections are concentered in him.

But this practical and experimental knowledge of God doth neceſſarily preſuppoſe the other, or the general knowledge of him, ſo as to be acquainted with the ſeveral expreſſions which God in Scripture hath made uſe of, whereby to reveal himſelf and his perfections to us; as when he is pleaſed to call himſelf the Almighty God, the All-wiſe and Infinite, the juſt and gracious God, and the like; or to ſay of himſelf, *I am that I am*; that is, in and of myſelf eternal. Unleſs we firſt know that theſe and ſuch-like expreſſions belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impoſſible for us to arrive at that knowledge of him, which is neceſſary to our ſerving him aright.

And I come to the laſt thing to be conſidered here concerning the *knowledge of God*, even that it is neceſſary to our ſerving him; ſo that none can ſerve him that does not firſt know him, and therefore that the method, as well as matter of David's advice is here obſervable: *Know thou the God of thy fathers, and ſerve him*; or, firſt know him, and then ſerve him *with a perfect heart and a willing mind.*

And verily, one would think that this is a truth ſo clear, ſo evident of itſelf, that it needs no proof or demonſtration; for how is it poſſible for us to know how to ſerve God, unleſs we firſt know that God whom we ought to ſerve? for all our ſervices unto God ſhould be both proper to his nature, and ſuitable to his perfections; and therefore, unleſs I firſt know his nature and perfections, how can I adjuſt my ſervices to them? As for example, I am to fear his greatneſs, and *truſt on his mercy*, and rejoice in his goodneſs, and deſire his favour: But how can I do this, unleſs I know that he is thus great and merciful, good and favourable?

Moreover, as a man cannot ſerve God when he hath a mind to do it, ſo neither will we have a mind or heart to ſerve

him unleſs he firſt knows him. For the motions of the will are always regulated by the ultimate dictates of the practical underſtanding; ſo that a man chuſes or refuſes, loves or hates, deſires or abhors, according as he knows any object that is preſented to him to be good or evil. And therefore how can I chuſe God as my chiefeſt good, unleſs I firſt know him to be ſo; or love him as I ought, above all things, unleſs I firſt know him to be better than all things; or perform any true ſervice to him, unleſs I firſt know him to be ſuch a one, as deſerves to have true ſervice performed unto him?

Nay, laſtly, nothing that we can do can be accepted as a ſervice to God, unleſs it be both grounded upon, and directed by a right knowledge of him. God would not accept of blind ſacrifices under the law, much leſs will he accept of blind ſervices now under the goſpel; and therefore he expects and requires now, that whatſoever we do, either to or for him, be a *Logike Latreia, a reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. xii. 1. That our ſouls as well as bodies, yea, and the rational as well as ſenſitive part be employed in all the ſervices which we perform to him; which certainly cannot be, unleſs we firſt know him; ſo that there is an indiſpenſable connection betwixt our knowing and ſerving God; it being as impoſſible for any man to ſerve him, that doth not firſt know him, as it is to know him aright, and not to ſerve him.

But however indiſpenſable this connection be in its own nature, the church of Rome can make a ſhift to diſpenſe with it; yea, ſo far as to aſſert, that *ignorance is the mother of devotion*. But you muſt excuſe them, for they do not mean by devotion, as we do, the real ſerving of God, but only the performing of ſome outward ſervices to him. And ſuch a kind of devotion, I confeſs, ignorance may be the mother of: But a man muſt be groſly ignorant that thinks this to be devotion, which is but a piece of pageantry, a mocking inſtead of ſerving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a diſmal, what a dreadful account the heads of that church muſt hereafter give, for daring to keep the people in ſo much ignorance as they do; ſo as to render them incapable of ſerving God, that ſo they may be the more ready to ſerve the church; that is, the intereſts and deſigns of the court of Rome.

But let them look to that; whilſt we, in the mean while, ſtudy to know God before all things elſe, conſidering,

Firſt, God therefore made us that we might know him, and that we might know that he made us. And therefore

it is that he hath made rational creatures capable of reflecting upon him that made us ſo: neither did he only make us at firſt, but he ſtill preſerves us; we feed daily at his table, and live upon his bounty. And the very beaſts that any of us keep, know thoſe that keep them; and ſhall we be more brutiſh than brutes themſelves, and not know him that keeps and maintains us? O how juſtly may God then call *heaven and earth to witneſs againſt us*, as he did once againſt his people Iſrael, *Iſa.* i. 2, 3, 4.

Secondly, There is none of us but have attained to knowledge in other things: Some of us have ſearched into arts and ſciences, others are acquainted with ſeveral languages; none of us but are, or would be expert in the affairs of this world, and underſtand the myſteries of our ſeveral trades and callings; what, and ſhall he alone, by whom we know other things, be himſelf unknown to us? What is, if this be not, a juſt cauſe, wherefore God ſhould infatuate and deprive us of all our knowledge in other things? ſeeing we labour more to know them, than him from whom we receive our knowledge.

Thirdly, *Ignorance of God*, is itſelf one of the greateſt ſins that we can be guilty of, and which God is moſt angry for, *Hoſ.* iv. 4. And there God himſelf imputes the deſtruction of his people, to the *want of knowledge*, v. 6. Nay, and it is that ſin too that makes way for all the reſt. For what is the reaſon that many ſo frequently blaſpheme God's name, ſlight his ſervice, tranſgreſs his laws, and incenſe his wrath againſt them, but merely becauſe they do not know him, how great, how terrible a God he is? For did they but thus rightly know him, they could not but regard the thoughts of doing any thing that is offenſive to him; and therefore the true *Knowledge of God* would be the beſt ſecurity, and the moſt ſovereign antidote in the world againſt the infection of ſin, and the prevalency of temptations over us; neither would it only preſerve us from ſin, but put us upon duty and ſervice, and direct us alſo in the performance of it. Inſomuch that the hardeſt duty will be eaſy to one that knows God; the eaſieſt will be hard to one that knows him not. Hard did I ſay? yea, and impoſſible too, for although a man may know God, and yet not ſerve him, it is impoſſible that any man ſhould ſerve God unleſs he knows him? knowledge itſelf being both the firſt duty that we owe to God, and the foundation of all the reſt.

And therefore, to conclude, if any deſire to perform the vow, they made in their baptiſm, to *love and fear*, to *honour*

*and obey the eternal God* that made them: If any deſire to be Chriſtians indeed, and *holy in all manner of converſation*; if any deſire to *truſt on the promiſes*, and obſerve the precepts of the great Creator and Poſſeſſor of the world, to live above the *Snares of death*, and to antedate the *Joys of heaven*; if any deſire to *live the life*, and to *die the death of the righteous*, to ſerve God here ſo as to enjoy him hereafter; let all ſuch but ſtudy the ſcriptures, and frequent the public ordinances; be conſtant and ſincere in prayer and meditation, neglecting no opportunity of acquainting themſelves with God, but making uſe of all means poſſible to get their hearts poſſeſſed with a reverential apprehenſion of God's greatneſs and glory, and with a due ſenſe of his goodneſs and perfections and their work will be ſoon done; for if they thus know God they will ſerve him too with a *perfect heart and a willing mind.*

We have ſeen how we ought to know God; and we are now to conſider how we ought to ſerve him; without which, indeed, our knowledge of him will avail us nothing. For, as the apoſtle argues, *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal*, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. So here: Tho' we ſhould have the higheſt notions and ſpeculations in divinity, that men or angels ever had; though we ſhould underſtand the higheſt myſteries in religion, and dive into the profoundeſt ſecrets of Chriſtian philoſophy; though we ſhould excel the greateſt ſchoolmen, and the moſt learned doctors that ever lived; and were able to baffle hereſies, diſpute error and ſchiſm out of the Chriſtian church, and evince the truth of the articles of our faith, by more than mathematical demonſtrations; yet, if after all this, our knowledge be only notional, not moving our affections, nor putting us upon the practice of what we know, *it is but as ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal:* It may make a noiſe in the world, and get us applauſe among men, but it will ſtand us in no ſtead at all before the Eternal God, yea, it will riſe up in judgment againſt us another day, and ſink us lower into the abyſs of torments. And therefore, though men may, God doth not look upon this as the true knowledge of himſelf. Neither can any one be properly ſaid to know God, that doth not ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. And therefore, having diſcourſed of that knowledge which is neceſſary to our ſerving God, I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew, how we ought to ſerve God according to our knowledge.

In ſpeaking unto which, I muſt beg the reader's moſt ſerious and Chriſtian attention, as to a matter which concerns our lives; yea, our eternal lives in another world. I hope there are none of thoſe that pretend to inſtruct, ſo brutiſh and atheiſtical, as not to deſire to ſerve God: none ſo proud and ſelf-conceited, as to think that they ſerve him well enough already, or at leaſt know how to do it. I write only to ſuch as want to be inſtructed, read books of practical religion with no other deſign but to ſerve God, and to learn how to ſerve him better. And if this be our only deſign, as I hope it is, let us manifeſt it to the world, and to our conſciences, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon our own hearts. For I may venture to ſay, that this is the nobleſt and moſt neceſſary ſubject that I can write, or any one can read of; and that, which if ſeriouſly weighed, rightly conſidered, and truly practiſed, will moſt certainly bring us to the higheſt happineſs which our natures are capable of, or our perſons were at firſt deſigned for.

Now, for our clear proceeding in a matter of great importance, we will firſt conſider, what it is to ſerve God? A queſtion very neceſſary to be treated of and reſolved, becauſe of the general miſtakes that are in the world about it: Many people fancying the ſervice of God to conſiſt in ſome few particular acts; as in ſaying their prayers, reading the ſcriptures, going to church, giving an alms now and then to the poor; eſpecially if they be but zealous and reſolute in the defence of the party or faction they are of, ſo as to promote it to the higheſt of their parts, eſtates, or power, then they think they do God good ſervice, and that this is all he requires of them. Others think they ſerve God by ſerving of his creatures, as in praying to ſaints, bowing to images, and falling down before the Euchariſt when it is carried in proceſſion: Nay, many there are, who think they ſerve God when they diſhonour him, wreſting his ſcriptures, corrupting his doctrine, oppoſing his vicegerents, ſeducing his people and ſervants unto error, and all for the promoting of ſome temporal intereſts, or groundleſs opinions. But we muſt know that the ſervice of God is a thing of an higher nature, and nobler ſtamp than ſuch ſilly mortals would perſuade us it is; conſiſting in nothing leſs than,

1. In devoting of ourſelves, and all we have, or are, or do, unto the honour of the eternal God; reſigning our hearts wholly to him, and ſubduing all our paſſions and affections before him. For ſeeing we were wholly made by him, and wholly

depend upon him, if we would ſerve God at all, we muſt ſerve him with all we are; every faculty of our ſouls and member of our bodies employing themſelves in thoſe ſervices which he ſet them, ſo as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preſervation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchaſed us with his own moſt Precious Blood; and therefore being thus bought with a price, we *ſhould glorify God both in our ſouls and bodies, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

And as we are to ſerve him with all we are, ſo alſo with all we have. *Honour the Lord with all thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt-fruits of all thine increaſe*, Prov. iii. 9. Whatſoever we have we receive from his bounty, and therefore whatſoever we have ſhould employ for his glory: Our parts, our gifts, our eſtates, our power, our time, whatſoever we call ours, is his in our hands, and therefore to be improved, not for ourſelves, but him; as our Saviour ſhews in the parable of the talents, which the maſter of the houſe diſtributed amongſt his ſervants; *to ſome he gave one, to ſome five, to others ten*, that every one might employ his proportion to his maſter's uſe: neither *ſquandering it away*, nor yet *laying it up in a napkin*. It is God that is the grand maſter and poſſeſſor of the world, who parcels it out amongſt his creatures, as himſelf ſees good, but whereſoever he entruſteth any thing, he expects the improvement of it for himſelf. And ſo, I ſuppoſe, doth every one of us from ſuch ſervants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their hands be laid out, not for themſelves, but for us; and that they ſpend their time in our ſervice, not their own: and if they do otherways, none of us but will ſay, they do not ſerve us but themſelves. How then can we expect that God will look upon us as ſerving him, when we do not do ſo much for him as we expect from our own ſervants, though our fellow-creatures? Or how can we think that we ſerve him as we ought, unleſs we ſerve him as much as we can? Or that God ſhould look upon us as his ſervants, unleſs we employ and improve whatſoever we have, not for our own pleaſure, profit, or applauſe, but for his honour and glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's words, *Mat.* v. 16. *Let your light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

2. Hence the ſerving of God conſiſteth alſo in the performing of ſincere and univerſal obedience to all his laws and

commands, which is but the natural conſequent of the former: For if our whole man, both ſoul and body, and whatſoever we have, or are, ought to be devoted to his glory, it muſt needs follow, that whatſoever we do ſhould be conformable to his precepts; which alſo is no more than every one of us expects from our ſervants: For thoſe whom we have covenanted with to be our ſervants, and whom we keep upon that very account, that they may ſerve us; we all expect that they ſhould obey all our commands, and do whatſoever in juſtice and by our covenants we can enjoin them. But how much more then muſt we ourſelves be obliged to obey all the laws and precepts of him that made us, whoſe creatures we are, and whoſe ſervants, by conſequence, we ought to be?

I ſay, all his laws and precepts; for we muſt not think to pick and chuſe, to do ſome things, and leave other things undone: for we ſhould take it ill if our ſervants ſhould ſerve us ſo; if when we ſend them upon ſeveral buſineſſes, they ſhould mind one of them, and neglect all the other, we ſhould queſtionleſs look upon them as very idle and careleſs ſervants: But let us conſider and bethink ourſelves, whether we have not ſerved our maſter the Eternal God, as bad as our ſervants have or can ſerve us. He hath given us ſeveral laws to obſerve, and hath ſet us ſeveral works to do, and we perhaps can make a ſhift to do ſomething that is required of us; but never think of the other, and perhaps, the principal things too that he expects from us.

Juſt as if when Moſes had broke the two tables of ſtone, whereon the ten commandments were written, one man ſhould have come and ſnatched away one piece, a ſecond run away with another piece, and a third with another, until at length ten ſeveral perſons had gotten ten ſeveral pieces, whereon the ten commandments were ſeverally written; and when they had done ſo, every one of them ſhould have ſtriven to keep the law that was written on his own piece, never minding what was written in the others. Do you think that ſuch perſons as theſe are, could be reputed the ſervants of God, and to obſerve his laws, when they minded only one particular branch or piece of them? the caſe is our own; we hearing of ſeveral laws and commands, which the moſt high God hath ſet us, get ſome one of them by the end, and run away with that, as if we were not concerned in any of the reſt. But let us ſtill remember, that the ſame finger that wrote one of the commands, wrote all the other too. And

therefore he that doth not obſerve all, as well as one, cannot properly be ſaid to obſerve any at all. Neither indeed doth he ſerve God in any thing: For though he may do ſomething that God requires, yet it is plain, that he doth not therefore do it becauſe God requires it; for if he did ſo, he would do all things elſe too that God requires. And therefore ſuch a perſon doth not ſerve God at all in what he doth; no, he ſerves himſelf rather than God, in that he doth it not in obedience to God, but with reſpect to himſelf, as to get himſelf a name and credit among men, or perhaps to ſatisfy his troubleſome conſcience, which would not let him be at quiet unleſs he did it.

But now one that would ſerve God indeed, hath *reſpect to all his commandments*, Pſal. cxix. 6. *And walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs, as Zacharias and Elizabeth are ſaid to have done*, Luke i. 6. And thus whoſoever would ſerve the Lord in any thing muſt ſerve him in all things that he requireth. And this is that which David means in this advice to his ſon, ſaying, *Know thou the God of thy fathers, and ſerve him:* that is, obſerve and do whatſoever he enjoins, and that too *with a perfect heart and a willing mind.*

And ſo I come to the ſecond thing to be conſidered here; that is, the manner how we ought to ſerve God, *even with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.*

Firſt, *with a perfect heart*; That is, with integrity and ſincerity of heart, not from any by-ends, or ſiniſter deſigns, but out of pure obedience to the laws of God, as he is the ſovereign of heaven and earth, and in Chriſt, *our Lord, and our God.* A thing much to be obſerved in all our ſervices, without which, indeed, they are no ſervices at all. Inſomuch that ſhould we pray our tongues to the ſtumps, and faſt our bodies into ſkeletons; ſhould we fill the air with ſighs, and the ſea with tears for our ſin; ſhould we ſpend all our time in hearing of ſermons, and our whole eſtates in relieving the poor; ſhould we hazard our lives, yea, give our bodies to be burnt for our religion, yet nothing of all this would be accepted as a ſervice unto God, unleſs it be performed with a ſincere obedience to his laws, and with a ſingle eye, aiming at nothing but his glory, which ought to be the ultimate *end of all our actions*, 1 Cor. x. 31.

*Secondly*, We muſt not only ſerve God *with a perfect heart*, but with a *willing mind* too, *benepheſch ch·phatſoah* properly with a willing ſoul; that is, our will and all the affections

of our ſouls ſhould be carried after, and exerciſed in the ſervice of almighty God. Our deſires are to be inflamed towards it, our love fixed upon it, and our delight placed in it. Thus the Iſraelites are ſaid to have *ſought the Lord with their whole deſire*, 2 Chron. xv. 15. And we are commanded to *love the Lord our God*, and ſo to *ſerve him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul*, Deut. xi. 13. Yea, we are to *delight to do the will of God*, Pſal. xl. 8. as our Saviour did, ſaying, *It is my meat to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*, John iv. 34. Thus we are ſo to eſteem the ſervice of God above our neceſſary food, pleaſing ourſelves in pleaſing him, and ſo make his ſervice not only our buſineſs, but our recreation too; and whoſoever doth not ſo, whatſoever he doth for God, he cannot be ſaid to ſerve him, becauſe he doth it againſt his will, and againſt the bent and inclination of his ſoul. And therefore, though as to the outward act he may do that which God commands, yet inwardly he doth it not, becauſe his ſoul is ſtill averſe from it, by which means it ceaſeth to be the *ſervice of God*; becauſe it is not performed by the whole man, even ſoul and body, both which are neceſſarily required in our performance of real ſervice to him that made them both.

*Thirdly*, What is the reaſon why we ought to ſerve God ſo? Becauſe *he ſearcheth the heart, and underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts*: that is, he is thoroughly acquainted with every thought in our hearts, and with every motion and inclination of our ſouls infinitely better than ourſelves are. And therefore it is in vain for us to think to put him off with outward and formal, inſtead of inward and real ſervice: For he doth not only ſee what we do, but knows too what we think while we are doing of it; and dot hnot only obſerve the matter of our actions, but the manner alſo of our performing them: It being his great prerogative to *ſearch the heart*, and *to try the reins, and to have all things naked and open unto him*, Heb. iv. 13. ſo that he ſeeth what the ſoul doth within doors, in the ſecret cloſets of the heart, as clearly as what it doth without in the open ſtreets of the world: every affection of the ſoul being as manifeſt unto him, as the actions of the body are; and therefore hypocriſy is the moſt fooliſh and ridiculous ſin imaginable, making as if we could cheat and deceive God, and hide our ſins from the all-ſeeing eyes of Omniſcience itſelf, or make God believe that we are holy, becauſe we appear to be ſo to men.

But to bring this matter more closely to ourselves: We have been all at church, perhaps, performing our service and devotions to him that made us; it is true, as to our outward appearance, there hath been no great difference betwixt us, we have been equally present at these public ordinances, and we do not know but one hath prayed and heard the word of God both read and preached as well as another; so that seemingly our services are all alike as to us, but are they so to God too? That I much question: For he hath taken especial notice all along, not only of the outward gestures of our bodies, but likewise of the inward behaviour of our hearts and souls before him: And therefore, as I hope he hath seen many of us serving him with a *perfect heart and a willing mind*; so, I fear, he hath found too many of us tardy, *coming before him as his people come, and sitting before him as his people sit*, while our hearts in the mean time have been about our covetousness; and hath plainly seen, though our bodies have been at church, our souls have been elsewhere, thinking upon our relations, or estates, or something or other, besides what our thoughts should have been employed about in so solemn a duty as the public worship. But know this, *O vain man, whosoever thou art, that God will not be mocked:* And though thou hast not seen, or perhaps so much as thought of him, he hath seen thee and thy thoughts too; yea, at this very moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou answer him, the great judge of the whole world, when he shall tell thee to thy face, and call his Omniscience to witness, that he saw thee at this, as at other times, play the hypocrite with him, making as if thou servedst him, when thou servedst him not; and instead of serving him *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*, servedst him in neither heart nor mind. Let us all remember this when we approach God's house, and also bethink ourselves afterwards, whether we have not been guilty of this sin! if we have, we may be sure God knows it, and we shall know it another day. But to prevent what justly may be our doom, let us repent of our former neglects in this kind; and, for the future, whensoever we are serving God, let us still look upon him as looking upon us, and fix in our hearts this one thing, *That God knows all things in the world.* And therefore let us not think to put God off with such careless and perfunctory services as heretofore too many of us have done; but if we desire to serve him at all, let us serve him *with a perfect heart and a willing mind.*

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Thus I have endeavoured to ſhew both, what it is to ſerve God, and how we ought to do it: Now let us not think it ſufficient that we know how to ſerve God, unleſs we ſerve him according to our knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour's words: *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them*, John xiii. 17. Which happineſs, that all who read this may attain unto, let me adviſe them, *in the name of the eternal God that made them*, to renounce and forſake their former maſters, ſin, ſatan, and the world, whoever may have hitherto been enſlaved by them, and now dedicate themſelves wholly to the ſervice of him that made them for that very purpoſe that they may ſerve him; yea, and who hath compoſed our natures ſo, that the higheſt happineſs we are capable of, conſiſts in our ſerving him: And therefore let us not think, that he calls upon us to ſerve him, becauſe he wants our ſervice; no, be it known unto all that he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his own perfections, and needs not the ſervices of ſuch poor ſilly mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from him: And therefore he doth not call upon us to ſerve him becauſe he cannot be happy without us, but becauſe we cannot be happy without him: Not becauſe he wants our ſervice, but becauſe we want it; it being impoſſible for us to be happy, unleſs we be holy; or to enjoy God, unleſs we ſerve him.

Wherefore all ye that deſire to go to heaven, to have him that made you reconciled to you, and ſmile upon you; or that deſire to be really and truly happy; ſet upon the work which God ſent you into the world about, put it not off any longer, make no more vain excuſes, but from this day forward, let the ſervice of God be your daily, your continual employment and pleaſure: Study and contrive each day how to advance his glory and intereſt in the world, and how you may walk more ſtrictly, more circumſpectly, more conformably to his laws than ever. But whatſoever ſervice you perform unto him, be ſure to do it *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*. Think not to put him off with fancy inſtead of faith, or with outward performances inſtead of real duties: But remember that he *ſearcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the ſons of men*, and obſerves the inward motions of the ſoul, as well as the outward actions of the life: And therefore whereſoever you are, whatſoever you do, ſtill bethink yourſelves, that he that made you, ſtill looks upon you; taking notice not only of the matter of the actions which you perform, but alſo of the manner of your perform-

ing them; and therefore be ſure to have a ſpecial care in all your ſervices for or unto God, that your *hearts be ſincere before him, and your minds inclined to him*, that ſo you may *ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.*

But to conclude; whoever ye are that read this diſcourſe, I have ſhewn you the *things that belong unto your everlaſting peace*, have acquainted you with the method and manner of your ſerving God in time, in order to your enjoyment of him to eternity; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be reſolved to practiſe it, yea, or no, it is only the eternal *God* that knows. But this I know, that if you will not be perſuaded to ſerve *God*, yea, and to ſerve him too *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*, you will one day wiſh you had, but then it will be too late. And therefore if you will put it to the venture, go on ſtill, and with the unprofitable ſervant, *hide your talents in a napkin*, or laviſh them out in the revels of ſin and vanity; let thy belly be ſtill thy *God*, and the world thy lord; ſerve thyſelf or ſatan, inſtead of the "living *God:* But know that for all "this, *God* will bring thee into judgment;" after which expect nothing elſe but to be overwhelmed with horror and confuſion to eternity.

Whereas on the other ſide, ſuch amongſt you as ſhall ſincerely endeavour from henceforth to ſerve *God with a perfect heart and a willing mind*, I dare, I do aſſure them in the name of *God*, *their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord:* For *God* ſuffers not his enemies to go unpuniſhed, nor his ſervants unrewarded.

And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the ſervice of ſo great and ſo good a maſter, and devote yourſelves wholly to his ſervice, and employ your talents faithfully for his glory. Remember the time is but ſhort; and Chriſt himſelf will receive you into eternal glory, ſaying, "Well "done, good and faithful ſervant."

## *Thoughts upon the Myſtery of the Trinity.*

THO' there be many in the world that ſeem to be religious, there are but few that are ſo: One great reaſon whereof is, becauſe there are ſo many miſtakes about religion, that it is an hard matter to hit upon the true notion of it: And therefore deſiring nothing in this world ſo much as to be an inſtrument in *God*'s hand to direct men into the true religion, my great care muſt, and by the bleſſing of *God* ſhall be, to inſtil into them right conceptions of him, that is the only object of all religious acts, without which it is impoſſible to continue, or indeed to be religious: The true nature and notion of religion conſiſting in the right carriage and deportment of our whole man, both ſoul and body, towards him that made us; whom therefore, unleſs we truly know, we can never be truly religious; and therefore they that begin their religion with zeal and paſſion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they ſhould end; our zeal for *God*, and love unto him, being the higheſt acts of religion, and therefore cannot be the firſt; but they neceſſarily preſuppoſe the true knowledge of *God*, without which our zeal will be blind, and our love both groundleſs and tranſient.

But as it is impoſſible to be truly religious, unleſs we know God, ſo it is very difficult ſo to know him, as to become truly religious. It is true that there is ſuch a Supreme Being in and over the world, as we call God; the very light of nature teaches, and reaſon itſelf demonſtrates it to be the moſt certain and undeniable. But what he is, and what apprehenſions we ought to have of this glorious being, none but himſelf is able to deſcribe and manifeſt unto us; ſo that our conceptions of him are ſtill to be regulated by the diſcoveries that he hath made of himſelf to us; without which, though we may have ſome confuſed notions of him, yet we can never ſo know him, as to ſerve him faithfully, and, by conſequence, be truly religious.

Hence therefore, if we would know God, we muſt ſearch the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, wherein God hath been pleaſed moſt clearly to manifeſt and diſcover himſelf unto us: I ſay, both the Old and New Teſtament, for otherwiſe, our knowledge of God may be very defective and

erroneous, there being ſeveral things which God, in the New Teſtament, hath moſt plainly revealed of himſelf, which in the Old Teſtament are more darkly and obſcurely delivered to us. As for example, the great Myſtery of the Trinity; though it be frequently intimated in the Old Teſtament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to underſtand it without the New: Inſomuch, that the Jews, though they have had the law above three thouſand, and the prophets above two thouſand years among them, yet to this day they could never make this an article of faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans, ſtill aſſert, *That God is only one in perſon as well as nature:* Whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Teſtament, than that there is but one God, and yet there are three perſons, every one of which is that one God: And ſo that though God be but One in nature, yet he is Three in Perſons; and ſo Three Perſons, as yet to be but One in nature.

And, verily, although there was no other text in all the ſcripture, whereon to ground this fundamental article of our Chriſtian faith; that of *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, is a ſufficient foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, neceſſary to be believed concerning the glorious Trinity, but what may eaſily and naturally be deduced from theſe words; which were ſpoken, it is true, by our Saviour before his aſcenſion, but I queſtion whether they were thoroughly underſtood, till after the Holy Ghoſt was come down on earth: It being only by God himſelf that we can come to the true knowledge of him, much leſs are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe three perſons in the God-head, without the aſſiſtance of one of them, that is, of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom the other two are wont to work; he being the iſſue, if I may ſo ſay, and breath of both. Hence it is, that the wiſdom of the church, for theſe many centuries, hath thought fit to order, that this great myſtery be celebrated the next Lord's day after the commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming down upon the diſciples, and in them, upon all true believers; both becauſe all Three perſons have now manifeſted themſelves to mankind; the Father in his creation of them, the Son in his converſing with them, and the Holy Ghoſt by his coming down upon them: And alſo to ſhew, that it is only by the grace and aſſiſtance of God's ſpirit that we can rightly believe in this glorious and incomprehenſible my-

ſtery, which our Saviour hath ſo clearly revealed to us in theſe words, *Go ye, and teach all nations*, &c.

For the opening of which, we muſt know that our Saviour, in the foregoing verſe, acquaints his diſciples, that now all power was given him *in heaven and in earth*; by virtue whereof he here iſſueth forth his commiſſion to his Apoſtles, and, in them, to all that ſhould ſucceed them, to ſupply his room, and be his vicegerents upon earth, he being now to reſide in his kingdom of heaven. For ſaith he, *all power is given to me in heaven and earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations.* As he alſo ſaith elſewhere to them, *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo I ſend you*, John xx. 21. As if he ſhould have ſaid, My Father having commited to me all power and authority both in heaven and earth, I therefore authorize and commiſſionate, yea, and command you to go and teach all nations, *&c.*

This therefore is part of the commiſſion which our Lord and maſter left with his Apoſtles immediately before he parted from them. Thoſe being the laſt words which St. Matthew records him to have ſpoken upon earth; and therefore they muſt needs contain matter of very great importance to his church; and it muſt needs highly concern us all to underſtand the true meaning and purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I ſhall obſerve the ſame method and order as he did in ſpeaking them.

Firſt, therefore, here is the work he ſends the Apoſtles about; *Go ye therefore and teach, poreuthentes oun matheteuſate*, which more properly may be rendered, *Go ye therefore and diſciple all nations*, or *make the perſons of all nations to be my diſciples*, that is, Chriſtians. That this is the true meaning of the words, is plain and clear, from the right notion of the word here uſed, *matheteuo*, which coming from *mathetes*, a Diſciple, it always ſignifieth either to be or to make diſciples, whereſoever it occurs in all the ſcriptures; as *matheteutheis*, Matth. xiii. 52. which is *inſtructed*, ſay we, the Syriack better, *damtachlamad*, that is, made a Diſciple, a *Talmid*, that is, not only a Scholar or Learner, but a Follower or Profeſſor of the Goſpel, here called the kingdom of heaven. Another place where this word occurs, is Mat. xxvii. 57. *ematheteuſe tou Ieſou*, where we rightly tranſlate it, was Jeſus' Diſciple. Another place is Acts xiv. 21. *kai matheteuſantes*, which we improperly render, having taught many; the Syrian and Arabic, more properly, *having made many Diſciples.* And theſe are all the places in the New Teſtament

where this word is uſed, except thoſe I am now conſidering, where all the Eaſtern languages render it according to its notation, Diſciple. The Perſian paraphraſtically expounds it, *Go ye and reduce all nations to my faith and religion.* So that whoſoever pleads for any other meaning of theſe words, do but betray their own ignorance in the original languages, and by conſequence, in the true interpretation of ſcripture.

I ſhould not have inſiſted ſo long upon this, but that the falſe expoſition of theſe words hath occaſioned that no leſs dangerous than numerous ſect of Anabaptiſts in the world; for the old Latin tranſlation having it, *Euntes ergo, docete omnes gentes*; hence the German, where anabaptiſm firſt began, and all the modern tranſlations render it as we do, *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them.* From whence it was ſuppoſed by ſome that were not able to dive into the true meaning of the words, that our Saviour here commanded that none ſhould be baptized but ſuch as were firſt taught the principles of the Chriſtian religion; which is the greateſt miſtake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not ſpeak one word of teaching before baptiſm, but only after, *v.* 20. *diduſcentes*, his meaning being only that his Apoſtles ſhould go about the world and perſuade all nations to forſake their former idolatries and ſuperſtitions, and to turn Chriſtians, or the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; and ſuch as were ſo, ſhould be baptized. And therefore infant baptiſm is ſo far from being forbidden, that it is expreſly commanded in theſe words; for all diſciples are here commanded to be baptized; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptized, becauſe diſciples. And ſeeing all diſciples are to be baptized, ſo are infants too, the children of believing parents; for they are diſciples as well as any other, or as well as their parents themſelves: For all that are in covenant with God muſt needs be diſciples: But that children are always eſteemed in covenant with God, is plain, in that God himſelf commanded the covenant ſhould be ſealed to them, as it was all along by circumciſion. But that children are diſciples as well as others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, ſaying of Children, *of ſuch is the kingdom of God*, Mark x. 14. And therefore they muſt needs be diſciples, unleſs ſuch as are not diſciples can belong to the kingdom of God, which a man muſt be ſtrangely diſtempered in his brain before he can ſo much as fancy.

And beſides, that children, ſo long as children, are looked upon as part of their parents; and therefore as their parents are, ſo are they: If their parents be heathen, ſo are

the children; if the parents be Jews, ſo are the children: if the parents be Chriſtian, ſo are the children too; nay, if either of the parents be a Chriſtian or Diſciple, the children of both are denominated from the better part, and ſo looked upon as Chriſtians too, as is plain, 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. *But now are they holy*, that is, in a federal or covenant ſenſe, they are in covenant with God; they are believers, Chriſtians, or diſciples, becauſe one of their parents is ſo.

Now ſeeing children are diſciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all diſciples to be baptized, it neceſſarily follows that children muſt be baptized too. So that the opinion that aſſerts, that children ought not to be baptized, is grounded upon a mere miſtake, and upon groſs ignorance of the true meaning of the ſcripture, and eſpecially of this place, which is moſt ridiculouſly miſtaken for a prohibition, it being rather a command for infant baptiſm.

But I muſt crave the reader's excuſe for this digreſſion from the matter principally intended, though I could not tell how to avoid it; nothing being more needful than to reſcue the words of our bleſſed Saviour from thoſe falſe gloſſes and horrible abuſes which theſe laſt ages have put upon them, eſpecially it coming ſo directly in my way as this did.

Secondly, Here is the extent of their commiſſion, which is very large indeed, not being directed to ſome few particular perſons, but to nations; not to ſome particular nations only, but to all nations; *Go ye therefore and diſciple all nations*; or, all the world, as it is, *Mark* xvi. 15. This was that which the prophet *Iſaiah*, or rather God by him, foretels, *Iſaiah* xlix. 6. which our Saviour himſelf ſeems to have reſpect unto, *Luke* xxiv. 46, 47. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this, that though the Jews hitherto had been the only people of God, and none but they admitted into covenant with him, now the Gentiles alſo are to be brought in and made confederates or copartners with them in the covenant of grace; that, the partition-wall being now broken down, the goſpel is to be preached to all other nations, as well as the *Jewiſh*; *Chriſt* being now come to be *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of his people Iſrael*.

But though the words of the commiſſion be ſo clear to this purpoſe, yet the Apoſtles themſelves underſtood it not, till God had interpreted it from heaven to St. Peter, ſhewing him in a viſion, that he ſhould call no man *common or unclean*, Acts x. 27. From which time forward, he, with the reſt of the Apoſtles, obſerved their commiſſion exactly in preaching

to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. And this was one end wherefore the Holy Ghoſt came down amongſt them, even to enable them to do what their maſter had commanded them, to preach unto all nations; but that they could not do, unleſs they could ſpeak all languages, which therefore the Holy Ghoſt enabled them to do, *Acts* ii. 4, 5. which alſo is a clear demonſtration of the true meaning and purport of theſe words: For there was no neceſſity that the Spirit ſhould teach the Apoſtles all languages, but that the Son had firſt enjoined them to preach unto all nations.

Thirdly, Hence is the manner whereby they are to admit all nations into the church of Chriſt, or into the Chriſtian religion, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* For the opening whereof we muſt know that baptiſm was a rite in common uſe amongſt the Jews before our Saviour's time, by which they were wont to admit proſelytes into their religion, baptizing them *in the name of the Father*, or of God. A little before our Saviour's appearance in the world, John Baptiſt being ſent to *prepare the way* for him, baptized the *Jews* themſelves, *as many as came unto him, in the name of the Meſſiah to come*, which was called *the baptiſm of repentance. I indeed baptize you*, ſays he, *with water to repentance; but he that comes after me, is mightier than I, &c. Matth.* iii. 11. But when our Saviour was to go to heaven, he left orders with his apoſtles to make diſciples; or admit all nations into the religion that he had preached, confirmed with miracles, and ſealed with his own blood, by baptizing them *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*; which form of baptiſm, queſtionleſs, his Apoſtles faithfully obſerved all along, as may be gathered alſo from *Acts* xix. 2, 3. where we may obſerve, how when they ſaid that they 'had not ſo much as heard of an Holy Ghoſt,' he wondering at that, aſked them 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' plainly intimating, that if they had been baptized aright, according to Chriſt's inſtitution, they could not but have heard of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe they had been baptized in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* But *ver.* 5. as alſo *Acts* ii. 38. chap. viii. 16. we read of *baptiſm adminiſtered in the name of the Lord Jeſus:* From whence ſome have thought that the apoſtles baptized only the *Gentiles in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, but the Jews in the *Name of the Lord Jeſus* only; becauſe they believing in the Father already, if they were but bap-

tized in the Name of Jeſus, and ſo teſtified their belief that he was the Meſſiah, they could not but believe in his Spirit too; but this expreſſion of baptizing in the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſeems to me rather to intimate that form of baptiſm which the Lord Jeſus inſtituted: For, doubtleſs, the Apoſtles obſerved the precepts of our Lord better than ſo, as to do it one way, when he had commanded it to be done another; and baptized only in the name of Jeſus, when he had enjoined them to baptize in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Neither did the church ever eſteem that baptiſm valid, which was not adminiſtered exactly according to the inſtitution, in the name of all the three perſons; which the primitive Chriſtians were ſo ſtrict in the obſervance of, that it was enjoined, that all perſons to be baptized ſhould be plunged three times into the water, firſt at the *Name of the Father, and then at the Name of the Son,* and laſtly, at the *Name of the Holy Ghoſt*; that ſo every perſon might be diſtinctly nominated, and ſo our Saviour's inſtitution exactly obſerved in the adminiſtration of this ſacrament.

Hence alſo it was, that all perſons to be baptized were always required, either with their own mouths, if adult, or if infants, by their ſureties, to make a public confeſſion of their faith in the three perſons, into whoſe names they were to be baptized: For this indeed was always looked upon as the ſum and ſubſtance of the Chriſtian religion, to *believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghoſt:* and they who believed in theſe three perſons, were ſtill reputed Chriſtians; and they who did not, were eſteemed infidels or hereticks.

Yea, and our Saviour himſelf hath ſufficiently declared, how neceſſary it is for us to believe this great myſtery; as alſo how eſſential it is to a Chriſtian, ſeeing that he requires no more in order to our initiation into his church, but only that we be baptized *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* In which words we may obſerve:

*Firſt,* A *Trinity of Perſons,* into whoſe names we are baptized, the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* This is that Myſtery of Myſteries which is too high for human underſtandings to conceive, but not too great for a divine faith to believe; even that although there be but one God, there are three Perſons, the *Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt,* every one of which is that one and the ſelf-ſame God: and there-

fore it is that baptiſm is here commanded to be adminiſtered in the name of all three.

Now to confirm our faith in this great myſtery, whereinto we are all baptized, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, in few terms, what grounds we have in ſcripture to believe it. For which end we muſt know, that though this great myſtery hath received great light by the riſing of the Sun of righteouſneſs upon the world, yet it did not lie altogether undiſcovered before; *yea, from the very foundation of the world*, the church, in all ages, hath had ſufficient ground whereupon to build their faith on this great and fundamental truth: For in the very creation of the world, he that created it is called *Chaim* in the plural number: And in the creation of man, he ſaid, *Let us make man in our own image*; from whence, though not a Trinity, yet a plurality of perſons is plainly manifeſted; yea, in the beginning of the world too, we find both Father, Son, and Spirit concurring in the making of it.

For, Firſt, it is ſaid *that God created heaven and earth*, and then, *That the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 1, 2. There are two perſons, God, and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the world by his word: *He ſaid, let there be light, and there was light.* From which expreſſion St. *John* himſelf concludes, *That all things were made by the Son of God* or *his Word*, John i. 3. and ſo does St. *Paul*, Col. i. 16.

Thus we read afterwards, *The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his word by my tongue*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. where we have *Jehovah, the Spirit of Jehovah*, and the *Word of Jehovah*, plainly and diſtinctly ſet down. As alſo in *Pſal.* xxxiii. 6. and *Iſa.* lxii. 1. where there is the Lord ſpeaking of his Son, and ſaying, *That he will put his Spirit upon him:* And this alſo ſeems to be the reaſon why the holy angels, when they praiſe God, ſay *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hoſts*, Iſa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. ſaying holy thrice, in reverence to the three Perſons they adore.

Thus we might diſcover this truth in the Old Teſtament; but in the New we can ſcarce look over it. For when Jeſus was baptized, *Mat.* iii. 16. had we, who know nothing but by our ſenſes, been preſent at this time with Jeſus at Jordan, our very ſenſes would have conveyed this truth to our underſtandings, whether we would or no. Here we ſhould have heard a *Voice from heaven*; whoſe was it, but *God the Father?* Here we ſhould have ſeen one coming out of Jordan; who was that but *God the Son?* Here we ſhould have ſeen

ſomething elſe too, in the form of a *Dove*; who was that but *God the Spirit?* Thus was *God the Father* heard ſpeaking; *God the Son* was ſeen aſcending out of the water; and *God the Holy Ghoſt* deſcending from heaven upon him. The firſt was heard in the ſound of a voice, the ſecond was ſeen in the form of a man, and the third was beheld in the ſhape of a Dove.

*Voce Pater, natus Corpore, flamen Ave.*

But there are many ſuch places as this all the New Teſtament over, where the three Perſons of the Godhead are diſtinctly mentioned, as *Luke* i. 35. *John* xiv. 16, 26. Chap. xvi. 7. *Gal.* iv. 6. But the words of St. *Paul* are very remarkable too, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14. And yet *that all theſe three perſons were but one God*, Gen. xviii. 2, 3. John x. 30. St. John expreſly aſſerts, ſaying, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit*, and theſe three are one, 1 *John* v. 7. Which certainly are as plain and perſpicuous terms as it is poſſible to expreſs ſo great a myſtery in. But I need not have gone ſo far to have proved that there are three diſtinct perſons in the Godhead: The words I am treating of being a ſufficient demonſtration of it: For as all the three perſons met together at our Saviour's baptiſm; ſo doth our Saviour here command, that all his Diſciples be baptized in the name of all three: And therefore I cannot but admire how any one ſhould dare to profeſs himſelf to be a Chriſtian, and yet deny or oppoſe the ſacred Trinity, into which he was baptized when he was made a Chriſtian: For, by this means, he renouncing his baptiſm, blaſphemes Chriſt, unchriſtians himſelf, blotting his own name out of the catalogue of thoſe who were made Chriſtians only by being baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

II. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every perſon in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: For here we ſee divine worſhip is to be performed to them all; and all that profeſs the true religion muſt be baptized in the Name of the Son and Holy Ghoſt, as well as of the Father: which certainly would be the greateſt abſurdity, yea the moſt horrid impiety imaginable, were not they God as well as he. For, if they be not God, they are creatures; if they be creatures, reaſon as well as ſcripture forbids the ſame honour and worſhip to be conferred on them, which is given to God him-

ſelf, and only due to him; which here, notwithſtanding, we ſee is given to them, and that by our Lord himſelf, commanding baptiſm to be adminiſtered in his own Name and in the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as in the Name of the Father, and ſo making himſelf and the Spirit equal ſharers in the ſame honour that is given to the Father. So that, was there no other place in the whole ſcripture to prove it, this alone would be ſufficient to convince any gainſayer, that the Son and Spirit are God as well as the Father, or rather the ſame God with him. But that I may unveil this myſtery, and confirm this truth more clearly, we will conſider each perſon diſtinctly, and ſhew that one as well as the other is really God.

That the Father is God, none ever denied it, and therefore we need not prove it. But, if the Father be God, the Son muſt needs be God too; for the ſame names, properties, works and worſhip, which in ſcripture are aſcribed to the Father, are frequently aſcribed to the Son alſo in Scripture; the Father is called Jehovah in ſcripture, ſo is the Son, *Hoſ.* i. 7. *Jer.* xxiii. 6. the Father is called God, ſo is the Son, *John* i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*; with God, as to his perſon: God as to his nature. So alſo *John* xx. 28. *Acts* xx. 28, *&c.* Moreover, is the Father Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt? So is the Son, *Rev.* i. 8. Is the Father Eternal? So is the Son, *Iſa.* ix. 6. *Rev.* i. 8. Is the Father Almighty? So is the Son, *Heb.* i. 3. Is the Father everywhere? So is the Son, *Matth.* xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things? So doth the Son, *John* xxi. 17. *chap.* ii. 24. Did the Father make all things? So did the Son, *John* i. 3. Doth the Father preſerve all things? So doth the Son, *Heb.* i. 3. Doth the Father forgive ſins? So doth the Son, *Matth.* ix. 6. Is the Father to be worſhipped? So is the Son, *Heb.* i. 6. Is the Father to be honoured? So is the Son, *John* v. 23. No wonder therefore that Chriſt being thus in the *form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. He did not rob God of any glory, by ſaying himſelf was equal to him. The greateſt wonder is, how any one can believe the ſcriptures to be the word of God, and deny this great truth, than which nothing can be more plain from ſcripture: Nothing being more frequently and more clearly aſſerted than this is. And verily it is well for us it is ſo; for if Chriſt was not *God*, neither could he be our Saviour. None being able to free us from ſins, but

only he againſt whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Chriſt's Divinity, and yet expect pardon and ſalvation from him: All our hopes and expectations from him depending only upon his aſſumption of our human nature into a Divine Perſon.

And that the *Holy Ghoſt* alſo is *God*, is frequently aſſerted in the holy ſcriptures which himſelf indited. Indeed this very inditing of the ſcriptures was a clear argument of his Deity, as well as the ſcriptures indited by him. What man, what angel, what creature, who but *God* could compoſe ſuch articles of faith, enjoin ſuch divine precepts, foretel and fulfil ſuch propheſies as in ſcripture are contained, who ſpake unto all, or by the prophets? who did they mean, when they ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts?* Who was this Lord of Hoſts, that inſtructed them what to ſpeak or write? Was it *God the Father* or *God the Son?* No, but it was *God the Holy Ghoſt:* "For the prophecy came not in old time by the "will of man, but holy men of *God* ſpake as they were mo-"ved by the *Holy Ghoſt*," 2 Pet. i. 21. Acts xxviii. 25. ch. xxi. 11. The *Holy Ghoſt* therefore being the Lord of Hoſts, he muſt needs be *God*, there being no perſon that is or can be called the Lord of Hoſts, but he that is the very and Eternal *God*.

This alſo may be gathered from 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the ſpirit of God dwelleth in you*; for none can be the temple of *God*, but he in whom *God* dwells; for it is *God*'s dwelling in a place that makes that place the temple of *God*; and yet we are here ſaid to be the temple of *God*, becauſe the ſpirit dwelleth in us. And elſewhere, "Know ye not, *ſaith the Apoſtle*, that "your body is the temple of the *Holy Ghoſt* that is in you?" 1 *Cor.* vi. 19. which could not be unleſs the *Holy Ghoſt* was *God*.

Another expreſs ſcripture we have for it in *Acts* v. 3, 4. where St Peter propounds this queſtion to Ananias, "Why "hath ſatan filled thine heart to lye to the *Holy Ghoſt?*" and then tells him in the next verſe, "Thou haſt not lyed to "men, but to *God*;" and ſo expreſly aſſerts the *Holy Ghoſt* to be *God*.

Moreover, that the *Holy Ghoſt* is truly *God*, co-equal to the Father and Son, it is plain, in that the ſcriptures aſſert him to be, to have, and do whatſoever the Father or Son, is, hath, or doth, as *God*. For, is the Father and Son eternal? ſo is the Spirit, *Heb.* ix. 14. Is *God* the Father and

the Son every-where? ſo is the Spirit, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 7. Is *God* the Father, and the Son, a wiſe, underſtanding, powerful, and knowing *God?* ſo is the Spirit, *Iſa.* xi. 2. Are we baptized in the name of the Father and the Son? ſo are we baptized in the name of the *Holy Ghoſt.* May we ſin againſt the Father and the Son? ſo may we ſin too againſt the *Holy Ghoſt.* Nay, the ſin againſt this perſon only, is accounted by our Saviour to be a ſin never to be pardoned, *Matth.* xii. 31, 32. We may ſin againſt *God* the Father, and our ſin may be pardoned; we may ſin againſt God the Son, and our ſin may be pardoned: but if we ſin or ſpeak againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, "that ſhall never be forgiven, neither in this world, "nor in that which is to come." But, if the *Holy Ghoſt* be not *God*, how can we ſin againſt him? or how comes our ſin againſt him only, to be unpardonable, unleſs he be *God?* I know it is not therefore unpardonable, becauſe he is *God*, for then the ſins againſt the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, ſeeing they both are *God* as well as he; yet though this ſin is not therefore unpardonable, becauſe he is *God*, yet it could not be unpardonable, unleſs he was *God.* For, ſuppoſing him not to be *God*, but a creature, and yet the ſin againſt him to be unpardonable, then the ſins againſt a creature would be unpardonable, when ſins againſt *God* himſelf are pardoned: Which to ſay, would itſelf, I think, come near to the ſin againſt the *Holy Ghoſt.* But ſeeing our Saviour deſcribes this unpardonable ſin, by blaſpheming or ſpeaking againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, let them have a care that they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the *Holy Ghoſt* to be really and truly *God*, and ſo blaſpheme and ſpeak the worſt that they can againſt him.

III. We have ſeen what ground we have to believe, that there are three Perſons in the *Godhead*, and that every one of theſe three Perſons is *God*; we are now to conſider the order of thoſe Perſons in the Trinity, deſcribed in the words before us.

*Firſt*, The *Father*, and then the *Son*, and then the *Holy Ghoſt:* every one of which is really and truly *God*; and yet they are but one real and true *God.* A myſtery which we are all bound to believe, but yet muſt have a great care how we ſpeak of it, it being both eaſy and dangerous to miſtake in expreſſing ſo myſterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically Divine Nature, in more than one and the ſame Divine Perſon; or upon three Divine Perſons in no more than one and the ſame

Divine Nature? If we ſpeak of it, how hard is it to find out fit words to expreſs it? If I ſay the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt* be three, and every one diſtinctly *God*, it is true; but if I ſay, they be three, and every one a diſtinct *God*, it is falſe. I may ſay, the Divine Perſons are diſtinct in the Divine Nature; but I cannot ſay, that the Divine Nature is divided into the Divine Perſons. I may ſay, *God* the Father is one *God*, and the Son is one *God*, and the *Holy Ghoſt* is one *God*; but I cannot ſay, that the Father is one *God*, and the Son another *God*, and the *Holy Ghoſt* a third *God*. I may ſay, the Father begat another who is *God*; yet I cannot ſay that he begat another *God*. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is *God*, yet I cannot ſay, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another *God*. For all this while, though their perſons be diſtinct, yet ſtill their nature is the ſame. So that though the Father be the firſt perſon in the godhead, the Son the ſecond, the *Holy Ghoſt* the third; yet the Father is not the firſt, the Son a ſecond, the *Holy Ghoſt* a third *God*: So hard a thing it is to word ſo great a myſtery aright, or to fit ſo high a truth with expreſſions ſuitable and proper to it, without going one way or other from it. And therefore I ſhall not uſe many words about it, leſt ſome ſhould ſlip from me unbecoming of it; but, in as few terms as I can, I will endeavour to ſhew upon what account the Father is the firſt, the Son the ſecond, and the *Holy Ghoſt* the third Perſon in the Trinity.

*Firſt*, therefore, The Father is placed firſt, and really is the firſt perſon, not as if he was before the other two, for they are all co eternal; but becauſe the other two received their eſſence from him; for the Son was begottten of the Father; and the *Holy Ghoſt* proceedeth both from the Father and Son; and therefore the Father is termed by the primitive Chriſtians, *Riſa kai pege Theotetos*, the *Root and the Fountain of Deity*. As in waters there is the fountain or well head, then there is a ſpring that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the ſtream that flows both from the fountain and the ſpring, and yet all theſe are but one and the ſame water; ſo here *God* the Father is the fountain of the Deity; the Son, as the ſpring that boils up out of the fountain; and the *Holy Ghoſt*, that flows from both, and yet all three are but one and the ſame God. The ſame may alſo be explained by another familiar inſtance; the ſun, you know, begets beams, and from the ſun and beams together proceed both light and heat; ſo God the Father begets the Son, and from the Fa-

ther and Son together, proceeds the ſpirit of knowledge and grace: But as the ſun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all together: So neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghoſt, but only in order and relation to one another; in which only reſpect, the Father is the firſt perſon in the Trinity.

Secondly, the Son is the ſecond perſon, who is called the Son, yea, and the *only begotten Son of God*, becauſe he was begotten of the Father, not as others are by ſpiritual regeneration, but by eternal generation, as none but himſelf is: For the opening whereof, we muſt know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not himſelf ſterile or barren; but he that hath given power to animals to generate and produce others in their own nature, is himſelf much more able to produce one, not only like himſelf, but of the ſelf-ſame nature with himſelf, as he did in begetting his Son, by communicating his own unbegotten eſſence and nature to him. For the perſon of the Son was moſt certainly begotten of the Father, otherwiſe he would not be his Son; but his eſſence was unbegotten, otherwiſe he would not be God, and therefore the higheſt apprehenſions that we can frame of this great myſtery, the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the perſon of the Father to have communicated his Divine Eſſence to the perſon of the Son. And ſo of himſelf begetting his other ſelf the Son, by communicating his own eternal and unbegotten Eſſence to him. I ſay, by communicating of his Eſſence, not of his perſon to him, for then they would be both the ſame perſon, as now they are of the ſame Eſſence: The Eſſence of the Father did not beget the Son by communicating his perſon to him, but the perſon of the Father begat the Son by communicating his Eſſence to him; ſo that the perſon of the Son is begotten, not communicated, but the Eſſence of the Son is communicated, not begotten.

This notion of the Father's begetting the Son by communicating his Eſſence to him I ground upon the Son's own words, who certainly beſt knew how himſelf was begotten: "For, as the Father, ſaith he, hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he "given to the Son to have life in himſelf," *John* v. 26. To have life in himſelf, is an eſſential property of the divine nature, and therefore whereſoever that is given or communicated, the nature itſelf muſt needs be given and communicated too.

Now here we ſee how God the Father communicated this

his eſſential property, and ſo his Eſſence to the Son; and, by conſequence, though he be a diſtinct perſon from him, yet he hath the ſame unbegotten Eſſence with him; and therefore, as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath the Son life in himſelf; and ſo all other eſſential properties of the Divine nature, only with this perſonal diſtinction, that the Father hath this life in himſelf not from the Son, but from himſelf; whereas the Son hath it, not from himſelf, but from the Father: Or, the Father is God himſelf, not of the Son; the Son is the ſame God, but from the Father, not from himſelf; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son is rightly called by the council of Nice, "God of Gods, light of lights, "yea, very God of very God."

Thirdly, having thus ſpoken of the two firſt perſons in the Sacred Trinity, we come now to the laſt, the Holy Ghoſt. The laſt, I ſay, not in nature or time, but only in order; for, as to their nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to time, is one before another; none of them being meaſured by time, but all and every one of them Eternity itſelf. But though not in nature or time, yet in order, one muſt needs be before another; for the Father is of himſelf, receiving his Eſſence neither from the Son, nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in order, before both; the Son received his Eſſence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in order, is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit receiving his Eſſence both from the Father and the Son, muſt needs, in order, be after both.

I confeſs the Spirit is no where in ſcripture ſaid to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inſerting this into the Nicene Creed, was the occaſion of that ſchiſm betwixt the Weſtern and Eaſtern churches, which hath now continued for many ages; in which I think, both parties are blame-worthy; the Weſtern churches for inſerting this clauſe following into the Nicene Creed, without the conſent of a general council; and the Eaſtern for denying ſo plain a truth as this is: For tho' the Spirit be not ſaid to proceed from the Son, yet he is called the *Spirit of the Son*, Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 9. which queſtionleſs he would never have been, did he not proceed from the Son as well as from the Father. And verily, the Father communicating his own individual Eſſence and ſo whatſoever he is (his paternal relation excepted) to the Son, could not but communicate this to him alſo, even to have the ſpirit proceeding from him as it doth from himſelf. So that as whatſoever the Father hath originally in himſelf, that

hath the Son by communication from the Father: So hath the Son this, the ſpirit's proceeding from him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himſelf: and the ſpirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is placed after both, not only in the words before us, but alſo in 1 *John* v. 7. and ſo elſewhere.

From what I have hitherto diſcourſed concerning the great Myſtery, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, I ſhall gather ſome few inferences, and ſo conclude.

1. Is the Son of God, yea, the ſame God with the Father? Hence I obſerve, what a ſtrange myſtery the work of man's redemption is, that God himſelf ſhould become man. And he that was begotten of his Father, without a mother from eternity, ſhould be born of his mother, without a father, in time; that he that was perfect God, like unto the Father, in every thing, his perſonal properties only excepted, ſhould alſo be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our perſonal infirmities only excepted; that he that made the world ſhould be himſelf made in it; that eternity ſhould ſtoop to time, glory be wrapt in miſery, and the ſun of righteouſneſs hid under a clod of earth; that innocence ſhould be betrayed, juſtice condemned, and life itſelf ſhould die, and all to redeem man from death to life. Oh wonder of wonders! how juſtly may we ſay with the Apoſtle, "Without controverſy, "great is the myſtery of godlineſs," 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.

2. Is the Spirit alſo God? Hence I obſerve, that it is God alone that can make us holy; for ſeeing the ſcripture all along aſcribes our ſanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himſelf really and truly God, it neceſſarily followeth, that the ſpecial concurrence and influence of Almighty God himſelf is neceſſary to the making us really and truly holy.

3. Are all three perſons in the Trinity one and the ſame God? Hence I infer, they are to have one and the ſame honour conferred upon them, and one and the ſame worſhip performed unto them. Or, as our Saviour himſelf ſaith, That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, *John* v. 23. And ye believe in God, believe alſo in me, *John* xiv. 1. And as we pray to the Father, ſo ſhould we pray to the Son too, as the Apoſtles did, *Luke* xvii. 5. and St. Stephen, *Acts* vii. 59. and St. Paul to all three, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.

4. Is baptiſm to be adminiſtered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt? Hence I obſerve how

neceſſary it is to believe in theſe three perſons, in order to our being real and true Chriſtians; for we being made Chriſtians in the name of all three, that man ceaſeth to be a Chriſtian that believes only in one; For faith in *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt*, is neceſſary to the very conſtitution of a Chriſtian; and is the principal, if not the only characteriſtical note whereby to diſtinguiſh a Chriſtian from another man; yea, from a Turk; for this is the chief thing that the Turks, both in their Alcoran and other writings, upbraid Chriſtians for, even becauſe they believe a Trinity of perſons in the divine nature. For which cauſe they frequently ſay they are *people that believe God hath companions*; ſo that take away this article of our Chriſtian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but little difference betwixt a Chriſtian and a Turk: But by this means, Turks would not turn Chriſtians, but Chriſtians Turks, if this fundamental article of the Chriſtian religion was once removed; for he that doth not believe this, is no Chriſtian upon that very account, becauſe he doth not believe that by which a Chriſtian is made; and whatſoever elſe errors a man may hold, yet if he believes in *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt*, I cannot, I dare not but acknowledge him to be a Chriſtian in general, becauſe he holds faſt to the foundation of the Chriſtian religion, though perhaps he may build upon it hay and ſtubble, and ſo his ſuperſtructure be infirm and rotten.

I ſhall conclude with a word of advice to all ſuch as call themſelves by the name of Chriſt: I ſuppoſe and believe they are all Chriſtians, from their taking that name, and therefore I need not uſe any arguments to perſuade them to turn Chriſtians, for ſo they are already by profeſſion; but, ſeeing that they are Chriſtians, let me deſire them to conſider how they came to be ſo; even by being baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. And if they deſire to be Chriſtians ſtill, I muſt adviſe them to continue ſtedfaſt in that faith whereby they were made ſo. Of all the errors and hereſies which ſatan hath ſowed amongſt us, let us have an eſpecial care to avoid ſuch as ſtrike at the very foundation of our religion; I mean the Arians, Macedonians, Socinians, and all manner of Antitrinitarians, ſuch as deny the moſt ſacred Trinity.

But I hope we have better learned Chriſt than to hearken to ſuch opinions as theſe are; and therefore my next advice in brief is only this, That as we excel others in the truth of

our profeſſion, ſo we would excel them alſo in the holineſs of our life and converſation: Let us manifeſt ourſelves to be Chriſtians indeed, by believing the aſſertions, truſting in the promiſes, fearing the threatenings, and obeying the precepts of Chriſt our maſter, that both infidels and hereticks may be convinced of their errors, by ſeeing us out ſtripping them in our piety towards God, equity to our neighbours, charity to the poor, unity among ourſelves, and love to all; for this would be a clear demonſtration, that our faith is better than theirs is, when our lives are holier than theirs are; and for our encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, that if we believe thus, as Chriſt hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we ſhall alſo obtain what he hath promiſed, even *eternal happineſs in the world to come*: where we ſhall ſee, enjoy, and praiſe that God, into whoſe name we are baptized, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt for evermore. There, with Angels and Archangels, with the heavens and all the powers therein; with Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the bleſſed inhabitants of thoſe everlaſting manſions; with the glorious company of the apoſtles, the goodly fellowſhip of the prophets; the noble army of martyrs; all the company of heaven, and the holy church throughout all the world, we ſhall eternally laud and magnify thy ſacred name. 'O God 'the Father of heaven; O God, the Son, Redeemer of the 'world; O God, the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Fa'ther and the Son; O holy, bleſſed and glorious Trinity, 'three perſons and one God, evermore praiſing thee, the 'Father of an infinite majeſty; together with thine honour'able, true, and only Son; Thee the king of glory, O Chriſt; 'and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, the Comforter; *ſtill joining with 'the heavenly choir, and ſaying*, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God 'of Hoſts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be 'to thee, O Lord moſt high. We praiſe thee, we bleſs thee, 'we worſhip thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee 'for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly king, God the 'Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jeſus 'Chriſt, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, 'thou who takeſt away the Sins of the world, and ſitteſt at 'the right hand of God the Father. O bleſſed, glorious, 'and eternal Spirit; for thou only art holy, thou only art 'the Lord; thou only, O Chriſt, with the Holy Ghoſt, art 'moſt high in the glory of God the Father: For thine, O 'Lord, is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, 'for ever and ever. *Amen*.

'Almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us thy ſervants Grace, by the confeſſion of a true faith, to acknowledge the Glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine majeſty to worſhip the Unity; we beſeech thee that thou wouldſt keep us ſtedfaſt in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adverſities, who liveſt and reigneſt one God, world without end. *Amen.*'

And now having led the Chriſtian through this firſt ſtage of his courſe, and inſtructed him in the principles of his religion, and in the great *Myſtery of the Trinity*, into which he was baptized, it may be fit to bring him into the world and ſhew him how he ought to demean himſelf in regard to the things of it.

## *Thoughts upon Worldly Riches.*

### SECT. I.

HE that ſeriouſly conſiders the conſtitution of the Chriſtian religion, obſerving the excellency of its doctrines, the clearneſs of its precepts, the ſeverity of its threatenings, together with the faithfulneſs of its promiſes, and the certainty of its principles to truſt to; ſuch a one may juſtly be aſtoniſhed, and admire what ſhould be the reaſon that they who profeſs this not only the moſt excellent, but only true religion in the world, ſhould notwithſtanding be generally as wicked, debauched and profane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are ſo, is but too plain and obvious to every one that obſerves their actions, and compares them with the practice of Jews, Turks, and Infidels. For what ſin have they among them, which we have not as riſe among ourſelves? Are they intemperate and luxurious? Are they envious and malicious againſt one another? Are they uncharitable and cenſorious? Are they given to extortion, rapine and oppreſſion? So are moſt of thoſe who are called Chriſtians. Do they blaſpheme the name of God, prophane his Sabbaths, contemn his word, deſpiſe his ordinances, and trample upon the blood of his only Son? How many have we amongſt ourſelves that do theſe things as much as they?

But how comes this about, that they who are baptized into the name of Chriſt, and profeſs the religion which he

eſtabliſhed in the world, ſhould be no better than other people, and in ſome reſpects far worſe? Is it becauſe, though they profeſs the goſpel, yet they do not underſtand it? Nor know what ſins are forbidden, nor what duties are enjoined in it? That none can plead, eſpecially amongſt us who have the goſpel ſo clearly revealed, ſo fully interpreted, ſo conſtantly preached to us as we have. Inſomuch that if there be any one perſon amongſt us, that underſtands not what is neceſſ ry to be known, in order to our everlaſting happineſs, it is becauſe we will not, wilfully ſhutting our eyes againſt the light.

But what then ſhall we impute this wonder to, that Chriſtians are generally as bad as Heathens? Does Chriſt in his goſpel diſpenſe with their impieties, and give them indulgencies for their ſins, and licence to break the moral law? It is true, his pretended vicar at Rome doth ſo; but far be it from us to father our ſins upon him, who came into the world on purpoſe to ſave us from them. Indeed if we repent and turn from ſin, he hath both purchaſed and promiſed pardon and forgiveneſs to us, but not till then: But hath expreſly told us the contrary, aſſuring us, that *except we repent we muſt all periſh*, Luke xiii. 3. I confeſs there have been ſuch blaſphemous hereticks amongſt us, called Antinomians, who are altogether for faith without good works, making as if Chriſt by erecting his goſpel deſtroyed the moral law; but none can entertain ſuch an horrible opinion as that is, whoſe ſinful practices have not ſo far depraved their principles, that they believe it is ſo only becauſe they would have it to be ſo, directly contrary to our Saviour's own words, *Matth.* v. 17. "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law or the Pro-"phets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil." But I hope there is none of us but have better learned Chriſt, than to think that he came to patronize our ſins, who was *ſent to bleſs us by turning away every one of us from our iniquities*, Acts iii. 26. But how come Chriſtians then to be as bad and ſinful as other men? Is it becauſe they are as deſtitute as other men of all means whereby to become better? No, this cannot poſſibly be the reaſon, for nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at leaſt may, if we will, have whatſoever can any way conduce to the making us either holy here, or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto revealed to us in the word of God; we have that word frequently expounded and applied to us: we have all free acceſs, not only to the ordinances which God hath appointed, for

our converſion, but even to the very ſacraments themſelves, whereby our faith may be confirmed, and our ſouls nouriſhed to eternal life. And more than all this too, we have many gracious and faithful promiſes, that if we do but what we can, God, for Chriſt's ſake, will afford us ſuch aſſiſtances of his grace and ſpirit, whereby we ſhall be enabled to perform univerſal obedience to the moral Law, ſuch as God for Chriſt's ſake will accept of, inſtead of that perfection which the Law requires. So that now, if we be not all as real and true ſaints, as good and pious Chriſtians as ever lived, it is certainly our own faults: for we have all things neceſſary to the making of us ſuch, and if we were not wanting to ourſelves, it is impoſſible we ſhould fail of having all our ſins ſubdued under us, and true grace and virtue implanted in us. Inſomuch that ſince the Chriſtian religion was firſt revealed to the world, there have been certainly millions of ſouls converted by it, who now are glorified ſaints in heaven, which once were as ſinful creatures upon earth as we now are. But it ſeems they found the goſpel an effectual means of their converſion and ſalvation; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any defect in the goſpel, or the Chriſtian religion, that we are not all as good men as ever lived, and by conſequence better than the profeſſors of all other religions in the world.

But what then ſhall we ſay to this wonder of wonders, that Chriſtians themſelves in our age live ſuch looſe and diſſolute lives as generally they do? What ſhall be the reaſon that all manner of ſin and evil ſhould be both practiſed and indulged among us, as much as in the darkeſt corners of the world, upon which the goſpel never yet ſhined? Why, when we have ſearched into all the reaſons that poſſibly can be imagined, next to the degeneracy and corruption of our nature, this muſt needs be acknowledged as one of the chief and principal, that men living upon earth, and converſing ordinarily with nothing but ſenſible and material objects, they are ſo much taken up with them, that thoſe divine and ſpiritual truths which are revealed in the goſpel, make little or no impreſſion at all upon them: though they hear what the goſpel ſaith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concerned about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their affection being all bent and inclined only to the things of this world. And therefore it is no wonder, that they run with ſo full a career into ſin and wickedneſs, notwithſtanding their profeſſion of the Goſpel, ſeeing their natural propenſity and inclination to the things of this world

are ſo ſtrong and prevalent within them, that they will not ſuffer themſelves to think ſeriouſly upon, much leſs to concern themſelves about any thing elſe.

The Apoſtle, in his firſt epiſtle to Timothy, chap. vi. endeavouring to perſuade men from the over eager deſire of earthly enjoyments, preſſes this conſideration upon us, that ſuch an inordinate deſire of the things of this world betrays men into many and great temptations, *v.* 8, 9. And then he gives this as the reaſon of it, *v.* 10. *For the love of money is the root of all evil:* that is, in brief, the love of riches and temporal enjoyments is the great reaſon why men are guilty of ſuch great and atrocious crimes as generally they are; there being no evil but what ſprings from this, as from its root and origin; which is ſo plain a truth, ſo conſtantly and univerſally experienced in all ages, that the heathens themſelves, the ancient poets and philoſophers, could not but take notice of it. For Bion the philoſopher was wont to ſay, that *Philargyria*, the love of money, was *kakias metropolis, the metropolis of wickedneſs:* And Apollodorus, *alla ſtheon te to kephalaion ton kakon eirkas en philargyria gar panta eni, When thou ſpeakeſt of the love of money, thou mentioneſt the head of all evils, for they are all contained in that.* To the ſame purpoſe is that of the poet Phocylides, *e de philochremoſune meter kakotetos apazes, The love of riches is the mother of all wickedneſs.* What theſe by the light of nature hath here divine authority ſtamped upon it; God himſelf aſſerting the ſame thing by his apoſtle, *riza gar panton ton kakon eſtin e philargyria. The love of money is the root of all evil*; which, that we may the better underſtand, we muſt conſider,

I. What is here meant by money.

II. What by the love of riches.

III. How the love of money is the root of all evil.

I. As for the firſt, I need not inſiſt long upon it, all men knowing well enough what money is. But we muſt remember, that by money is here underſtood not only ſilver and gold, but all earthly comforts, poſſeſſions, and enjoyments whatſoever, whether goods, lands, houſes, wares, wealth or riches of any ſort or kind whatſoever.

II. By the love of money we are to underſtand that ſin which the ſcriptures call Covetouſneſs; and the true nature and notion of it conſiſteth eſpecially in three things.

1. In having a real eſteem and value for wealth or money, as if it was a thing that could make men happy, or better than

otherwiſe they could; as it is plain all covetous men have their deſire of riches proceeding only from a groundleſs fancy, that their happineſs conſiſts in having much, which makes them ſet a greater value upon riches, preferring them before other things, even before God himſelf. Hence the love of money is altogether inconſiſtent with the love of God, 1 *John* ii. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* It being impoſſible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the world too at the ſame time.

2. Hence the love of money ſuppoſeth alſo a delight and complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the aforeſaid eſteem they have for it; for, being poſſeſſed of a fond opinion that the more they have, the better they are, they cannot but be pleaſed with the thoughts of their preſent enjoyments, as the rich man was in the goſpel, *Luke* xii. 16, 17, 18, 19. who, becauſe his ground brought forth plentifully, reſolved to enlarge his barns, and lay up ſtores for many years, and bid his ſoul take her eaſe. How many ſuch fools have we amongſt us, who pleaſe and pride themſelves with the thoughts of their being rich?

3. From this eſteem for, and complacency in money or wealth, it follows that men are ſtill deſirous of having more, placing their happineſs only in riches; becauſe they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence how much ſoever they have, they ſtill deſire more, and therefore covetouſneſs in ſcripture is ordinarily expreſſed by *pleonechia*, which properly ſignifies an inordinate deſire of having more; having which kind of deſires can never be ſatisfied, becauſe they are able to deſire more than all the world, and to raiſe themſelves as high, and as far as the infinite Good itſelf. Now ſuch a love of money as this is, conſiſting in having a real eſteem for it, in taking pleaſure and delight in it, in longing and thirſting after it; this is that which the Apoſtle here ſaith *is the root of all evil*; that is, the great and principal cauſe of all ſorts of evil that men are guilty of, or obnoxious to; which that I may clearly demonſtrate to you, we muſt firſt know in general that there are but two ſorts of evil in the world, the evil of ſin, and the evil of puniſhment or miſery; and love of money is the cauſe of them both.

To begin with the evil of ſin, which is the only fountain from whence all other evils flow, and itſelf doth certainly ſpring from the love of money; as much or more than from any thing elſe in the whole world. Inſomuch that the greateſt

part of thoſe ſins which any of us are guilty of, proceed from this maſter ſin, even the love of money, as might eaſily be ſhewn from a particular enumeration of thoſe ſins which men are generally addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically in demonſtrating this, ſo as to convince men of the danger of this above moſt other ſins, I deſire it may be conſidered that there are two ſorts of ſins that we are guilty of, ſins of omiſſion, and ſins of commiſſion, under which two heads all ſins whatſoever are comprehended.

Firſt, for ſins of omiſſion. It is plain that our love of money is the chief and principal cauſe that makes us neglect and omit our duties to God and man, as it is manifeſt we moſt of us do. In ſpeaking unto which I muſt take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal ſalvation; and therefore howſoever ſome may reſent it, I am bound in duty and conſcience to remind men of their ſins, and particularly of this great prevailing ſin of covetouſneſs, or inordinate love of money, which moſt men give but too much reaſon to fear they are guilty of; and therefore I may tell them of it, without any breach of charity. It is true, I cannot pretend to be a ſearcher of hearts, that is only God's prerogative, and therefore I ſhall not take upon me to judge or cenſure any particular perſons; but I ſhall ſpeak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular application of it to himſelf. Neither ſhall I ſpeak of things at random, but I ſhall inſtance only in ſuch ſins which I can aſſert upon my own knowledge that moſt men allow themſelves, and that upon this account only, becauſe they love money.

For firſt, What is the reaſon that ſo few, indeed ſcarce any of us, are at prayers at church upon the week day, to perform our devotion to him that made us? Is it becauſe we think it impertinent to pray unto him? No, our preſence there on Sunday contradicts that; and I have more charity than to think that any are ſo atheiſtical as to imagine it to be ſuperfluous to pay our homage to the ſupreme Governor of the world, and to implore his aid and bleſſing upon us. But what then ſhould be the reaſon of it? In plain terms it is nothing elſe but becauſe men love money, and therefore are loth to ſpare ſo much time from their ſports or callings, as to go to church to pray to God for what they want, and praiſe his name for what they have. Let us ſearch into our hearts, and we ſhall acknowledge this to be the only reaſon of it. But it is a very fooliſh one, for who can bleſs us but God?

2. What is the reaſon that ſo many neglect the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper? Do we not all look upon it as our duty to receive it? I dare ſay we do; Chriſt himſelf having commanded it, Luke xxii. 19. and it being the only way whereby to manifeſt ourſelves to be Chriſtians; what then can be the reaſon of this neglect of it? but merely the love of money, which makes them both to ſpend time in preparing and fitting themſelves for it.

But ſeeing men thus excommunicate themſelves by not coming to the communion, in plain terms they deſerve to be excommunicated by the cenſures of the church. And if God ſhould in his providence deprive them of ever having an opportunity of receiving the ſacrament again, they muſt even thank themſelves for it. Howſoever this ſhall be their preſent puniſhment, that they ſhall be deprived of it, until they think it worth their while to come unto it.

3. What is the reaſon that the ſabbath is ſo profaned? That ſo many take their recreations upon the Lord's day, but becauſe they cannot ſpare time for it from getting money on other days; thinking the day long, becauſe they can get little in it, as *Amos* viii. 5. And why do ſo many profane the ſabbath, while at church, by thinking upon the world, but becauſe they love it? *Ezek.* xxxiii. 1.

4. What is the reaſon that charity is ſo cold, but that the love of money is grown ſo hot among us? For do not we all know it is our duty to relieve the poor? Hath not God expreſly commanded it! Hath he not threatened a curſe to them that do it not, and promiſed a bleſſing to them that do it? What then can be the reaſon that ſo many neglect it, but becauſe they love their money more than God?

To theſe might be added many other ſins, which the love of money daily occaſions. For what is the reaſon that many read the ſcriptures ſo ſeldom and ſo curſorily as they do? What is the reaſon that they either have none, or commonly neglect their family duties? that every ſlight occaſion will make them omit their private devotions; that they can find no time to look into their own hearts, to conſider their condition, and meditate upon God and Chriſt, and the world to come.

What is the reaſon that many know their ſhops better than their hearts, and are acquainted with the temper of their body more than with the conſtitution of their ſouls? that they are ſo careful and induſtrious in the proſecution of their worldly deſigns, ſo negligent and remiſs in looking after heaven?

What is or can be the reaſon of theſe things, but that inordinate love and affection they have for money, or the things of this world, which makes them ſo eager in the purſuit of them, that they forget they have any thing elſe to mind, and ſo much taken up with worldly buſineſs, that God and Chriſt, and heaven and ſoul, and All, muſt give way to it? Oh the folly and madneſs of ſinful men! What a ſtrange corrupt and degenerate thing is the heart of man become! that we ſhould be ſo fooliſh and unwiſe, as to prefer our bodies before our ſouls, earth before heaven, toys and trifles before the eternal God, and the worſt of evils before the beſt of Goods, even ſin itſelf, with all the miſeries that attend it, before holineſs and that eternal happineſs which is promiſed to it! And all for nothing elſe but the love of a little pelf and traſh, which hath no other worth but what our own diſtracted fancies put upon it.

And if the love of money be the root of ſo many ſins of omiſſion, how many ſins of commiſſion muſt needs ſprout from it? Indeed they are ſo many, that it would be an endleſs thing to reckon them all up, and therefore I ſhall not undertake it, but ſhall mention only ſuch of them as every one, upon the firſt reading, ſhall acknowledge to be the curſed offſpring of this one fruitful and big-bellied ſin of covetouſneſs, or the love of money; of which Cicero obſerves, that *nullum eſt officium tam ſanctum atque ſolenne, quod non avaritia comminuere atque violare ſoleat.* So we may ſay on the other ſide too, that there is no ſin ſo great and horrid, but covetouſneſs will ſometimes put men upon it.

Is idolatry a ſin? Yes certainly, one of the greateſt that any man can be guilty of; and yet nothing can be more plain, than that covetouſneſs, whereſoever it comes, draws it along with it, inſomuch that every covetous man is aſſerted by God himſelf to be an idolater, *Epheſ.* v. 5. and covetouſneſs to be idolatry itſelf, *Coloſ.* iii. 5. And the reaſon is plain, for what is idolatry, but to give that worſhip to a creature which is due only unto God? But what higher acts of worſhip can we perform to God, than to love him, and to truſt in him, which it is certain every covetous man gives to his money, and therefore covetouſneſs is called *philargyria, the love of money?* And we cannot but be all ſenſible what truſt and confidence men are wont to repoſe in their eſtates and incomes. But ſuch will ſay, we do not fall down before our money, nor pray unto it; but they truſt on it, and that is infinitely more than bare praying to it: And though they do not bow down before it

in their bodies, yet they make all the faculties of their ſouls to bow down and ſtoop unto it; they love and deſire it; they rejoice and delight in having of it; they are grieved and troubled for nothing ſo much as the parting with it, nor fear any thing ſo much as the loſing of it.

But they will ſay again, we do not ſacrifice to our bags, nor burn incenſe to our eſtates; we never did nor intend to offer ſo much as a lamb or calf unto it! It is true, they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the poor to it, ſuffering them to periſh with hunger, thirſt and cold, rather than relieve them with that neceſſary maintenance which God has put into their hands for them: they offer their own bodies to it, expoſing them to heats and colds, to dangers and hazards both by ſea and land, and all for money; yea, they offer their own ſouls to it likewiſe, as a whole burnt-offering, giving them to lie ſcorching in hell-flames to eternity, and that upon no other account but to get money; And tell me which are the greateſt fools, and moſt odious idolaters, ſuch as offer beaſts to the ſun and flames, or ſuch as offer themſelves both ſoul and body to dirt and clay? We cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worſe, and by conſequence the covetous man to be the greateſt idolater in the world, and that too only becauſe he is a covetous man.

Moreover, is not extortion and opreſſion a ſin? And yet we all know that it is the love of money that is the only cauſe of it. Is not ſtrife and contention a ſin? whence comes it but from our luſting after money? *James* iv. 1. Is not perjury a ſin? Is not corruption of juſtice a ſin? Is not cheating and cozenage a ſin? Is not pride and haughtineſs a ſin? Is not unrighteous dealing betwixt man and man a ſin? Is not theft and robbery a ſin? Is not treaſon and rebellion a ſin? Are not all theſe ſins, and great ones too? But whence ſpring theſe poiſonous fruits into the lives of men, but from the bitter roots of covetouſneſs in their hearts? It is the love of money that makes theſe ſins to riſe amongſt us: It is this that makes men forſwear themſelves, and cozen others: It is this that oft-times makes fathers ruin their children, and children to long for the death of their fathers; it is this that makes neighbours go to law, and brethren themſelves to be at variance; it is this that makes men ſtrive to overreach each other, and to blind the eyes of thoſe they deal with: It is this that hath cauſed ſome to murder others, and others to deſtroy themſelves. What ſhall I ſay more? There

is no impiety that can be committed againſt God, nor injury that can be offered unto men, but the love of money hath been the cauſe of it in others, and will be ſo in us, unleſs it be timely prevented, and therefore it may well be termed the Root of all the evil of ſin.

And it being the root from whence all the evil of ſin ſprings, it muſt needs be the root of all the evil of puniſhment and miſery too, miſery and puniſhment being the neceſſary conſequent of ſin. Indeed this ſin carries its miſery along with it, as Seneca himſelf ſaw by the mere light of nature, ſaying, *Nulla avaritia ſine poena eſt, quamvis ſatis ſit ipſa poenarum: No avarice is without puniſhment, though it be itſelf puniſhment enough.* For what a torment is it for a man to be always thirſty, and never able to quench his thirſt? Yet this is the miſery of every covetous man, whoſe thirſt after money can never be ſatisfied, and who is deſirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with comfort what he hath, loving money ſo well, that he grudgeth himſelf the uſe of it. Hence the aforeſaid author obſerved, that *in nullum avarus bonus eſt, in ſeipſum peſſimus. The covetous man is good to none, but worſt to himſelf.* And as this is the natural conſequent of this ſin in itſelf, ſo it is the ordinary puniſhment that God inflicts upon men for it, not ſuffering them to take any pleaſure in the uſe of what they love, *Eccleſ.* vi. 1, 2. And beſides that, what cares and fears what labours and travels, what dangers and hazards doth the love of money put men upon? How do they rack their brains and break their reſt to get it; and when it is gotten, what fears are they always in, leſt they ſhould loſe it again? What grief and trouble do the poor wretches undergo for every petty loſs that befals them? ſo that every covetous man is not only miſerable, but therefore miſerable becauſe covetous.

But if their miſery be ſo great in this life, how great will it be in that to come? Concerning which there are two things to be obſerved: Firſt, that the very having of riches makes it very difficult to get to heaven, *Matth.* xix. 23, 24, 25. *Luke* xvi. 19, 22. Hence Agur was afraid of them, *Prov.* xxx. 8. Neither do we ever read of any of the patriarchs, prophets, or the ſaints recorded in ſcripture, to have been guilty of this ſin, unleſs Baruch, who was reproved for it, *Jer.* xiv. 5.

And as the having of money makes it difficult to get to heaven, ſo the loving of it makes it impoſſible to keep out of hell. For ſo long as man is covetous, he is liable to every

temptation, ready to catch at every bait that the devil throws before him; ſo that he is led by him as he pleaſeth, till at length he be utterly deſtroyed, 1 *Tim.* vi. 9. And therefore the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere tells us, that the covetous have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, but the wrath of God will moſt certainly fall upon them, *Epheſ.* v. 5, 6. But the wrath of God is the greateſt evil of puniſhment that is poſſible for men to bear: Indeed it is that which once being incenſed makes hell fire. And yet we ſee that the heat of our love to money will enkindle the flames of God's wrath againſt us; yea, and ſuch flames too as will never be quenched, *Mark* ix. 24. And ſo for the little ſeeming tranſient pleaſure they take in getting, or keeping money now, they muſt live in miſery and contempt, in ſhame and torment for evermore.

Thus now we ſee that love of money will not only put us upon the evil of ſin, but it will alſo bring the evil of puniſhment upon us, both which the Apoſtle here, *v.* 9, 10. imputes to this ſin. And therefore he both well may and muſt be underſtood of both theſe ſorts of evil, when he ſaith, that *the love of money is the root of all evil*; which, the premiſes conſidered, I hope none can deny, and need I then heap up more arguments to diſſuade men from this ſin, and to prevail with them to leave doating upon the world, and loving of money? Is not this one argument of itſelf ſufficient? For is it poſſible for us to indulge ourſelves in this ſin, now we know it is the root of all evil? and that if we ſtill love money, there is no ſin ſo great but we may fall into it, and no miſery ſo heavy but it may fall upon us. Surely if this conſideration will not prevail upon us to deſpiſe and contemn, rather than to love and deſire this world, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that ſo long as men continue in this ſin, all writing and preaching will be in vain to them; and ſo will their hearing be, their going to church, their reading the ſcriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them; all this will ſignify nothing, this root of all evil is ſtill within us, and will bring forth its bitter fruit do what we can. And therefore as we deſire to profit by what we hear, as ever we deſire to avoid any known ſin whatſoever, to know what happieſt means to eſcape either preſent torment, or eternal miſery, as ever we deſire to be real ſaints, and to manifeſt ourſelves to be ſo, to go to heaven, and live with God and Chriſt for ever, let not our affections be entangled any longer in the briars and thorns of this lower world, let us beware of loving money. *If riches increaſe, let us not*

*ſet our hearts upon them*, Pſalm lxii. 10. but ſcorn and deſpiſe them hereafter, as much as ever heretofore we have deſired or loved them.

But I cannot, I dare not but in charity believe and hope, that by this time my readers are ſomething weaned from their doating upon the preſent world, and deſire to know how they may, for the future, get off their affections from it, ſo as to have this root of all evil extirpated, and quite plucked up from within them. I hope this is the deſire of all, or at leaſt of moſt of them; and therefore I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew them how they may infallibly accompliſh and effect it. In order thereto,

1. Let ſuch perſons often conſider with themſelves how unſuitable the things of this world are for their affections and love, which were deſigned only for the chiefeſt good. When God implanted the affection of love within us, he did not intend it ſhould be the root of all evil, but of all good unto us; and therefore he did not give it us, to place it fondly upon ſuch low and mean objects as this world preſents unto us, but that we ſhould love himſelf with all our hearts and ſouls, *Deut.* vi. 5. And ſurely he infinitely deſerves our love more than ſuch traſh can do.

2. Let them remember that ſo long as they love money, they may pretend what they pleaſe, they do not love God, 1 *John* ii. 15. nor Chriſt, *Matth.* x. 37. *Luke* xiv. 16. and by conſequence they have no true religion at all in them, *James* i. 27.

3. Let them often read and ſtudy our Saviour's ſermon upon the mount, where he pronounces the meek and low, not the rich and mighty, to be bleſſed, *Matth.* v. 3, 4. and weigh thoſe ſtrong and undeniable arguments which he brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the world, nor trouble our heads about the impertinent concerns of this tranſient life, *Matth.* vi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

4. Let them labour to confirm and ſtrengthen their truſt and confidence on the promiſes of God, who hath aſſured us, that if we love and fear him, he will take care of us, and provide all things neceſſary for us, *Matth.* vi. 33. This is the great argument which the Apoſtle uſes, *Heb.* xiii. 5, 6.

5. Let them remember that they are called to higher things than this world is able to afford them: The Chriſtian is an high and heavenly calling; we are called by it, and invited to a kingdom and eternal glory, 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 12. and therefore

ought not to ſpend our time about ſuch low and paultry traſh as riches and wealth.

6. Let them get above the world, let their converſation be in heaven, and then they will ſoon look down upon all things here below as beneath their concern, *Vileſcunt temporalia, cum deſiderantur aeterna*, ſaid St. Gregory. He that ſeriouſly thinks upon and deſires heaven, cannot but vilify and deſpiſe earth. O what fools and madmen do the bleſſed Angels, and the glorified ſaints in heaven, think us poor mortals upon earth to be, when they ſee us buſying ourſelves about getting a little refined dirt, and in the mean while neglecting the moſt tranſcendent glories which themſelves enjoy, altho' they be offered to us!

7. Let them never ſuffer the vanity of all things here below to go out of their minds, but remember ſtill, that get what they can, it is but vanity and vexation of ſpirit, as Solomon himſelf aſſerted upon his own experience, though he be ſure had more than any of us are likely to enjoy. And let them not only often repeat the words, but endeavour to get themſelves convinced thoroughly of the truth of them, which their own experience, duly weighed and rightly applied, will ſoon do.

8. Let it be their daily prayer to Almighty God, that he would take off their affections from the world, and incline them to himſelf, as David did, ſaying, "Incline my heart to thy teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs, *Pſal.* cxix. 36.

To all theſe means, let them add the conſtant and ſerious conſideration of what they have here read, that the love of money is the root of all evil; aſſuring themſelves, that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true by their own ſad and woful experience, when they ſhall be ſtripped of their preſent enjoyments, and ſo turn bankrupts in another world, where they will be caſt into priſon without having a farthing to relieve themſelves, or ſo much as a drop of water to cool their inflamed tongues.

By theſe and ſuch-like means, none of us but may ſuppreſs the love of money in us, which is the root of all evil, and ſo avoid or prevent all the evil which otherways will proceed from it. Whether any of my readers will be perſuaded to uſe the means or no, I know not; however let me tell them, that if they are loth to ſtrive to get their affections deadened to the world, it is an infallible ſign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and ſeed of all manner of

evil remains in them; nor can it be expected they will be perſuaded to any one duty whatſoever, until they are firſt prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their luſts and affections to the things of this world. For ſo long as thoſe are predominant within us, no grace whatſoever can be exerted, nor duty performed, nor any ſin avoided by us.

But oh how happy would it be, if it ſhould pleaſe the moſt high God to ſet what I have here ſaid home upon any, as to induce them to ſet themſelves ſeriouſly for the future to the eradicating or rooting up this love of money out of their hearts? What a holy, what a bleſſed, what a peculiar people ſhould we then be, and how zealous of good works! Then we ſhould take all opportunities of performing our devotions to Almighty God: then we ſhould have as many to the ſacrament as at a ſermon; then our churches would be filled all the week, as well as on Sundays, and the Eternal God conſtantly worſhipped with reverence and godly fear: Then we ſhall take delight in cloathing the naked, feeding the hungry, and relieving the oppreſſed: Then there would be no ſuch thing at cheating and cozenage, as lying and perjury, as ſtrife and contention amongſt us. But we ſhould all walk hand and hand together in the way of piety, juſtice, and charity upon earth, until at length we ſhall come to heaven, where we ſhall be ſo far from loving and deſiring money, that we ſhall account it as it is, even droſs and dirt; where our affection ſhall be wholly taken up with the contemplation of the chiefeſt good, and we ſhall ſolace ourſelves in the enjoyment of his perfections for evermore.

*Thoughts upon Worldly Riches.*

## SECT. II.

TIMOTHY after his converſation to the Chriſtian faith, being found to be a man of great parts, learning and piety, and ſo every way qualified for the work of the miniſtry, St. Paul, who had planted a church at Epheſus, the metropolis or chief city of all Aſia, left him to dreſs and propagate it, after his departure from it; giving him power to ordain elders or prieſts, and viſit and to exerciſe juriſdiction over them,

to ſee they did not teach falſe doctrines, 1 *Tim.* i. 3. That they be unblameable in their lives and converſations, 1 *Tim.* v. 7. And to exerciſe authority over them, in caſe they be otherwiſe, 1 *Tim.* v. 19. And therefore it cannot in reaſon but be acknowledged that Timothy was the Biſhop, ſuperintendant, or viſitor of all the Aſian churches, as he was always aſſerted to have been by the fathers of the primitive church, as Euſebius reports, ſaying, *Timotheos tes en Epheſo paroicias eſtoritai protos tes en epiſcopen eilechenai*, that Timothy is reported to have been the firſt biſhop of the province of Epheſus. Be ſure he had the overſight of all the churches that were planted there; and not only in Epheſus itſelf, but likewiſe in all Aſia, which was ſubject then to his eccleſiaſtical power and juriſdiction.

And hence it is that the Apoſtle St. Paul, in his firſt epiſtle to him, gives him directions how to manage ſo great a work, and to diſcharge ſo great a truſt as was committed to him, both as Biſhop and prieſt; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewiſe how to preach himſelf the goſpel of Chriſt. And having ſpent the whole epiſtle in directions of this ſort, in the cloſe of it, as it were at the foot of the epiſtle, he ſubjoins one general caution to be obſerved by him: *Charge them that are rich*, &c. Which words, tho' firſt directed to Timothy, were in him intended for all ſucceeding miniſters and preachers of the goſpel; ſuch I mean who are ſolemnly ordained and ſet apart for this work. We are all obliged to obſerve the command which is here laid upon us, as without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: For ſo long as their minds are ſet altogether upon riches, and the things of this world, we may preach our hearts out before we can ever perſuade them to mind heaven and eternal happineſs in good earneſt. This St. Paul knew well enough, and therefore hath left this not only as his advice and counſel, but as a ſtrict command and duty incumbent upon the preachers of the goſpel in all ages, that they *charge them that are rich*, &c. Where it muſt be obſerved in the firſt place, how we are expreſly enjoined to *charge them that are rich*, &c. a word much to be obſerved. The Apoſtle doth not ſay, deſire, beſeech, counſel, or admoniſh the rich, but *paraggelle tois ploufiois*, charge and command them that are rich. The word properly ſignifies ſuch a charge as the judges at an aſſize or ſeſſions make in the king's name, enjoining his ſubjects to obſerve the eſtabliſhed laws and ſtatutes of the kingdom. And ſo the word is al-

ways uſed in ſcripture for the ſtricteſt way of commanding any thing to be obſerved or done, as *Acts* v. 28. *ou paraggelia pareggeilamen humin: Did we not ſtrictly command you*, Luke v. 14. *pareggeillen auto. He charged him to tell no man.* Thus therefore it is that we are here enjoined to charge the rich in the name of the King of Kings, not to be high-minded, nor to truſt in uncertain riches, &c.

And this is the proper notion, and the only true way of preaching the word of God, which therefore in ſcriptures is ordinarily expreſſed by the word *keruſſein*, which properly ſignifies to publiſh or proclaim, as heralds do, the will and pleaſure of the prince, and in his name to command the people to obſerve it. Thus we are enjoined to preach the word of God, by publiſhing his will and pleaſure to men; charging them in his name to obey and practiſe it. For we come not to them in our own names, but in his that created and redeemed them; and therefore although we neither have, nor pretend to any power or authority over them, from ourſelves, yet by virtue of the commiſſion which we have received from the univerſal and ſupreme monarch of the world, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound, to charge and enjoin all in his name, to obſerve what he hath commanded them. Inſomuch, that although we pretend not to divine inſpiration, or immediate revelations from God, ſuch as the prophets had; yet we, preaching the ſame word which they did, may, and often ought to uſe the ſame authority which they uſed, ſaying as they did, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts*; For whatſoever is written in the ſcriptures, is as certainly God's word now, as it was when firſt inſpired or revealed to them. And therefore it cannot be denied, but that we have as much power to charge upon all the obſervation of what is there written, as they ever had, we being ſent to preach and proclaim the will of God unto all, by the ſame perſon as they were. Hence it is that the Apoſtle in the name of God commands Titus, and in him all ſucceeding miniſters of the goſpel, to ſpeak or preach the word of God, to exhort and rebuke all with authority, *Tit.* ii. 15. From whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our duty to preach with authority, as thoſe who have received power from God to make known his will and pleaſure to all men; or as the Apoſtle here expreſly words it, to *charge them not to be high-minded*, and the like.

But this I fear may be a very ungrateful ſubject to many, and therefore I ſhould not have inſiſted ſo long upon it, but

that there is a kind of neceſſity for it. For I verily believe, that the non-obſervance of this hath been, and ſtill is, the principal reaſon why people receive ſo little benefit by hearing of ſermons as they uſually do: For they look upon ſermons only as popular diſcourſes, rehearſed by one of their fellow creatures, which they may cenſure, approve, or reject, as themſelves ſee good. And we ourſelves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at leaſt remiſs, in this particular; in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long harangue or oration concerning ſome point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical divinity, and uſe only ſome moral perſuaſions to preſs upon our auditors the obſervance of what we ſay, without interpoſing or exerciſing the authority which is committed to us, ſo as to charge them in the name of the moſt high God, to obſerve and practiſe, what we declare and prove unto them to be his will, and by conſequence their duty. But for my own part, did I think that preaching conſiſted only in explaining ſome points in divinity, and uſing only moral arguments to perſuade men to perform their duty to God and man, I ſhould not think it worth my while to do it, becauſe I could not expect to do any good at all by it. For all the moral arguments in the world can never be ſo ſtrong to draw us from ſin, as our natural corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon men, either by our logic, or rhetoric; but our arguments muſt be fetched from on high, even from the eternal God himſelf, or elſe they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We muſt charge and command them in God's name, or elſe we had as good ſay nothing.

It is true, did we, who preach God's Word, propoſe nothing elſe to ourſelves, but to tickle men's ears and pleaſe their fancies, and ſo to ingratiate ourſelves into their love and favour, it would be eaſy to entertain them with diſcourſes of another nature, ſtuffed with ſuch fine words, quaint phraſes, and high notions, as would be very pleaſing and acceptable unto them. But I muſt take leave to ſay, that we dare not do it; for we know that as our auditors muſt give an account of their hearing, ſo it is not long before we muſt alſo give an account of our preaching too; for ſo God himſelf hath told us before-hand by his apoſtle, *Heb.* xiii. 17. But how ſhall we be able to look the eternal God in the face, yea or to look our auditors in the face at that time, if inſtead of charging their duty upon them, in order to their eternal ſalvation, we ſhould put them off with general diſcourſes,

which ſignifying nothing, only to pleaſe and gratify them whilſt we remain with them? No, we dare not do it, and therefore I wiſh men would not expect it from us; for we muſt not hazard our own eternal ſalvation, to gain their temporal favour and applauſe. And therefore ſeeing God hath been pleaſed to entruſt us ſo far with men's ſouls, as to direct them in the way to eternal life; howſoever they reſent it, we are bound in duty, both to God, to them, and ourſelves, to deal plainly with them, and to uſe the authority which he hath here committed to us, where he hath expreſly commanded us in his name, to *charge them that are rich in this world*, &c.

Where I deſire the reader to obſerve in the next place, that we of the clergy are not only impowered to charge the poorer, or meaner ſort of people, who, by reaſon of their extreme poverty and want, may ſeem inferior to us, but even rich men too; Charge them, ſaith the apoſtle, *that are rich in this world.* And the reaſon is, becauſe we come unto them in his name, who gives them all the riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when he himſelf pleaſeth; So that he can make the poor rich, and the rich poor, when he pleaſeth; and therefore the poor and rich are all alike to him; his power and authority is the ſame over both; and therefore we coming in his name, are ordered to make no diſtinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we are particularly commanded, to *charge them that are rich.*

Which is the next thing to be conſidered in theſe words, even whom the apoſtle means by them that *are rich in this world?* Which is a queſtion that needs a ſerious reſolution. For many men, not thinking themſelves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence that they are not to be reckoned amongſt thoſe whom the apoſtle here calls *rich in this world.* But whatſoever they may think of themſelves, I believe there are but few, except the very poor, who in a ſcripture ſenſe are not rich men; for whatſoever any have over and above their neceſſary maintenance, that the ſcriptures call riches, as is plain from Agur's wiſh, *give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me,* Prov. xxx. 8 From whence it is eaſy to obſerve, that as nothing but the want of convenient food is poverty; ſo whatſoever a man hath over and above his own convenient or neceſſary food, is properly his riches; and ſo he that hath it, is in a ſcripture ſenſe a rich man, and is therefore called here in my text *plouſios*, quaſi *polouſios*, one that hath much ſubſtance, or

more than he hath neceſſary occaſion for. And therefore although ſome may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may juſtly be reckoned in the number of rich men here ſpoken of; at leaſt all ſuch as, by the bleſſing of God, have not only what is neceſſary for their preſent maintainance, but likewiſe ſomething to ſpare, and ſo may all come under the notion of thoſe whom we are here commanded to charge not to be high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, *&c.*

Having thus conſidered the act which we are here commanded to exert, and the object, the rich of this world, we are now to conſider the ſubject-matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them; but that is here expreſly ſet down in ſeveral particulars, all which I ſhall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

I. That they *be not high-minded*; a neceſſary caution for rich men. For riches are very apt to puff men up with vain and fooliſh conceits of themſelves, ſo as to think themſelves to be ſo much the better, by how much they are richer than other people; but this is a grand miſtake, which we are here enjoined to uſe the utmoſt of our power and ſkill to rectify, by *charging them that are rich not to be high-minded*; that is, not to think highly and proudly of themſelves, becauſe they are richer or wealthier than other men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly-minded in the enjoyment of all temporal bleſſings, as if they enjoyed nothing: as conſidering, 1. How much ſoever they have, they are no way really the better for it.

1*ſt*, Not in their ſouls; they are never the wiſer nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God, by their being rich, *Eccleſ.* ix. 1. *Job.* 19.

2*dly*, Nor in their bodies; they are never the ſtronger, nor healthier, nor freer from pain and trouble, nor yet longer-lived than others

3*dly*, Nor in their minds; their conſciences are never the quieter, their hearts never the freer from cares and fears, neither can they ſleep better than other people, *Eccleſ.* v. 12.

4*thly*, Nor yet in their eſtate and condition.

First, Not in this life. For riches can never ſatisfy them, nor by conſequence make them happy; but they may ſtill be as miſerable in the enjoyments, as in the want of all things, *Eccleſ.* v. 11.

Secondly, Nor yet in the life to come; they are never the nearer heaven, by being higher upon earth; their gold and ſilver can never purchaſe an inheritance from them in the land of Canaan, *Ja.* iii. 5.

2. They are ſo far from being better, that they are rather much worſe for their having abundance here below.

1*ſt*, They have more temptations to ſin, to luxury, to covetouſneſs, to the love of this world, to the neglect of their duty to God, to pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs, to ſecurity and preſumption, *Luke* xii. 19.

2*dly*, It is harder for them to get to heaven, than it is for others; and, by conſequence, the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miſerable for ever, *Mat.* xix. 23. Whence our Saviour himſelf denounceth a woe upon them that are rich, *Luke* vi. 24. and James bids them *weep and howl for their miſeries*, James v. 1. And therefore adviſes us to rejoice rather at poverty than riches, *James* i. 9, 10. Now theſe things being conſidered as ſpoken by God himſelf, none can deny but that the rich are certainly in a worſe condition than the poor; and by conſequence, that men have no cauſe to be proud or high-minded, nor to glory in their riches, *Jer.* ix. 23. And therefore whatſoever outward bleſſings God has beſtowed upon us, *Let us not be high-minded but fear*, Rom. xi. 20.

II. Nor *truſt in uncertain riches*, which I confeſs is a very hard leſſon for a rich man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have riches, and not to truſt in them, as our Saviour himſelf intimates; in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely ſevered, *Mark* x. 23, 24. But certainly it is altogether as fooliſh a thing to truſt in riches, as it is to be proud of them. For,

1. They of themſelves can ſtand us in no ſtead, they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good; they cannot of themſelves either feed us, or cloath us, or refreſh us, or be any ways advantageous to us, without God's bleſſing, *Prov.* xi. 4. How much leſs can they be able to deliver us from the wrath to come? No, we may take it for a certain truth, our riches may much further our eternal miſery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future happineſs.

2. If we truſt in them, be ſure they will fail us, and bring us to eternal miſery and deſolation; for to truſt in any thing but God is certainly one of the higheſt ſins we can be guilty of, it is in plain terms idolatry, *He that truſteth in riches is ſure to fall*, Prov. xi. 28. For this is to deny God, *Job* xxxi. 24, 25, 28.

3. They are but uncertain riches, *they make themſelves wings and fly away*, Prov. xxiii. 5. They are in continual

motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one ſtay. So that you are never ſure of keeping them one day; and what reaſon then can we have to truſt on them? eſpecially conſidering, that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty itſelf, as the word here ſignifies, *truſt not in the uncertainty of riches*,

But in the living God; he, he is to be the only object of our truſt, whether we have, or have not any thing elſe to truſt on; or to ſpeak more properly, there is nothing that we can, upon good grounds, make our truſt and confidence, but only him who governs and diſpoſeth of all things according to his own pleaſure. So that it is he, and he alone that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our wit or policy, it is not our ſtrength or induſtry, it is not our trading and trafficking in the world, it is none but God that giveth us what we have, *Deut.* viii. 18. *Prov.* x. 22. And as it is he that maketh men rich, ſo he can make them poor again, when he himſelf pleaſeth; and they have cauſe to fear he will do ſo too, unleſs they obſerve what is charged upon them.

There are four duties ſtill behind, which we are here commanded to charge all thoſe who are rich to obſerve.

I. That *they do good*. In treating of which I might ſhew the ſeveral qualifications required to the making up of an action good; as that the matter of it muſt be good, as commanded, or at leaſt allowed by God; that the manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obediently, underſtandingly, willingly, chearfully, humbly, and ſincerely; and that the end be good too, ſo as that it be directed ultimately to the glory of God. But not to inſiſt upon that now, I ſhall only conſider what kind of good works the rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich men. And they are two, works of piety, and works of charity.

1. They are here commanded to do works of piety; where by works of piety, I mean, not their loving and fearing, and honouring of God, nor yet their praying to him, their hearing his word, or praiſing his name, for ſuch works of piety as theſe are, the pooreſt as well as the richeſt perſons amongſt us are bound to do; whereas the apoſtle here ſpeaks only of ſuch works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account becauſe they are ſo. And therefore by works of piety here, I underſtand ſuch works as tend to the honour of his name, to the performance of worſhip and homage to him, to the encouragement of his miniſters, the propagating of his goſpel, and the converſion of ſinners to him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmoſt of their power,

out of the eſtates, which for theſe purpoſes he hath entruſted with them. For thus they are expreſly commanded to honour the Lord with their ſubſtance, or riches, and with the firſt fruits of all their encreaſe, *Prov.* iii. 9. And the reaſon is, becauſe God is the univerſal proprietor, the head Landlord of all the world, and we have nothing but what we hold under him; neither are we any more than tenants at will to him, who may fine us at his own pleaſure, or throw us out of poſſeſſion whenſoever he ſees good. Now leſt we ſhould forget this, even upon what tenure it is that we hold our eſtates, God hath enjoined us to pay him, as it were, a quit-rent or tribute out of what we poſſeſs, as an acknowledgment that it is by his favour and bleſſing alone that we do poſſeſs it. So that whatſoever we do, or are able to offer to him, is but a due debt which we owe him; which if we neglect to pay him, we loſe our tenure, and forfeit what we have to the Lord of the manor, the ſupreme poſſeſſor of the world. Hence it is, that in all ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due ſenſe of God upon their hearts, were always very careful to pay this their homage unto God; inſomuch that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious uſe, wherein to teſtify their acknowledgment of God's dominion over them, and his right and property in what they had. A noble inſtance whereof we have in the children of Iſrael; for when the tabernacle was to be built for the ſervice and worſhip of God, they were ſo far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they preſently brought more than could be uſed in the building of it, *Exod.* xxxvi. 5, 6, 7. So it was too in the building of the temple, which David and the chiefs or nobles of Iſrael made great preparations for, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 6, 7, 8. And that they did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and giver of all, is plain from the following words, *ver.* 11, 12, 13. The ſame was alſo obſerved in the builders of the ſecond temple, as the raiſing the firſt out of its rubbiſh, wherein it had lain for many years. And as for Chriſtians, I need not tell you how forward thoſe who have been truly pious, have always been in doing ſuch works of piety, ſince moſt of the churches in Chriſtendom, or be ſure in this nation, have been erected by particular perſons. And it is very obſervable, that the more eminent any place or age have been for piety and devotion, the more pious works have been always done in it, for the ſervice and worſhip of Almighty God; which plainly ſhews, that where ſuch works are wanting, whatſo-

ever pretences they may make, there is no ſuch thing as true piety, and the fear of God. And therefore, as ever we deſire to manifeſt ourſelves to be what we profeſs, true Chriſtians indeed, men fearing God, and hating covetouſneſs, we muſt take all opportunities to expreſs our thankfulneſs unto God for what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to his ſervice and honour.

2. Beſides theſe works of piety towards God, the rich are enjoined alſo works of charity towards the poor; which though they have an immediate reference to the poor, yet God looks upon them as given to himſelf, *Prov.* xiv. 31. *Chap.* xix. 17. *Mat.* xxv. 40. Hence it is that God accepts of ſuch works as theſe alſo, for part of the tribute which we owe him; whereby we acknowledge the receipt of what we have from him, and expreſs our thankfulneſs unto him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a bleſſing upon what we have, nor that it ſhould be really good to us: For, as the apoſtle tells us, *every creature of God is good, if it be received with thankſgiving*, not elſe, 1 *Tim.* iv. 4. But no thankſgiving is acceptable but that which is expreſſed by works as well as words. And therefore it is neceſſary for us to pay this duty and ſervice to God, out of what we have, in order to the cleanſing and ſanctifying the reſidue of our eſtates unto us, without which we have not the lawful uſe of what we poſſeſs, but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour himſelf intimates, *Luke* xi. 41. A thing much to be conſidered. For I verily believe that the great reaſon why ſo many eſtates are blaſted ſo ſoon, and brought to nothing amongſt us, is becauſe men do not render unto God their duty and tribute out of what they have; and therefore it is no wonder that God in his providence turns them out of their poſſeſſion, and gives their eſtates to other perſons, who ſhall be better tenants to him, and be careful to pay him the duties which he requires of them. And therefore, in order to men's ſecuring their eſtates to themſelves and poſterity, it is abſolutely neceſſary that they obſerve the duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all that are rich in this world, even to do good with what they have; and not only ſo, but,

II. To be rich in good works, that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their riches, ſo as to proportion their good works to the riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the apoſtle's directions, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2. Thus in the place

before quo:ed, *Luke* xi. 41. where our Saviour bids the Phariſees to *give alms of ſuch things as they have*, his words are, *ta enonta dote eleemoſynen, give alms as you are able*, for ſo the words properly ſignify. And verily whatſoever we do, unleſs it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all: For we muſt not think to compound with him. When he hath given us all we have, he expects that we render all that he requires of us, that is, as much as we are able to pay unto him. As if a man owes you money, you will not accept of part inſtead of the whole; ſo neither will God from us; we all owe him as much as we are able to devote to his ſervice and honour, and we muſt not think to put him off with part of it; for he reckons that he receives nothing from us, unleſs it be proportionable to what he hath beſtowed upon us. But how little ſoever it is that we give or offer to him, if it be but anſwerable to our eſtates, it will be accepted by him, This our Saviour himſelf hath aſſured us of, *Mat.* xii. 43, 44. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the pooreſt perſon whatſoever, but may be as rich in good works as the richeſt, becauſe God doth not meaſure the goodneſs of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our eſtates; ſo that he who gives a penny, may do as good a work as he who gives a pound; yea, and a better too, becauſe his may be as much as he is able, whereas the other's is not: I wiſh all men may ſeriouſly weigh and conſider this, leſt otherwiſe they go out of the world without ever having done one good work in it: for we may aſſure ourſelves, he that is not thus rich in good works, doth no good at all with his riches.

But it is farther to be conſidered here, that this expreſſion, *rich in good works*, implies that good works are indeed our principal riches; and that men muſt not compute their riches ſo much from what they have, as from what they give and devote to God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands, but what we give is ours in God's hands, and he acknowledgeth himſelf our debtor for it, in that he tells us that we lend it to him, and promiſeth to pay it to us again, *Prov.* xix. 17. And therefore they who caſt up their accounts to know how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their houſes and lands that are made over to them, nor yet upon what is owing to them by men; but ſhould reckon only upon what they have given to pious and charitable uſes, upon what trea-

ſure they have laid up in heaven. For whatſoever they may think at preſent, I dare aſſure them, that will be found to be their only riches another day. And therefore if any one deſires to be rich indeed, let him take my advice, do what good he can with the riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough; for this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he muſt likewiſe obſerve what follows: To be

III. *Ready to diſtribute*; that is, ready upon all occaſions to pay his tribute unto God, whenſoever he in his providence calls for it; taking all opportunities of doing good, and glad when he can find them, *Gal.* vi. 7. Thus therefore whenſoever any opportunities preſent themſelves of expreſſing our thankfulneſs unto God, by works either of piety or charity, whatſoever other buſineſſes may be neglected we muſt be ſure to lay hold on that. For I dare ſay, that there is none but will grant me, that there is all the reaſon in the world that God ſhould be ſerved in the firſt place, and that he ſhould have the firſt fruits of all our increaſe, *Prov.* iii. 9. *Exod.* xxiii. 19. *Deut.* xxvi. 2. And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of piety towards God, and of charity to the poor, or as the ſcripture calls them in general good works, are always to be done in the firſt place; and whatſoever other works may be omitted, be ſure they muſt not. But we ought ſtill to be as ready to pay our duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from him, as ready to give as to receive; and by conſequence as men let no opportunities ſlip wherein they can increaſe their eſtates, they are much leſs to let any opportunities paſs wherein they can any way improve their eſtates for God's glory and others good; that they ought to be ready upon all occaſions to diſtribute what they can upon charitable and pious uſes.

IV. *Willing to communicate.* As we muſt do it with a ready hand, ſo we muſt do it with a willing heart too. Thus we are enjoined to ſerve God willingly, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 6. and chearfully, 2 *Cor.* ix. 6, 7. Indeed God accepts of none but free-will offerings. If we be not as willing to do good works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be confident God will never accept of them. And therefore in plain terms, if any would be rich in good works as becometh Chriſtians, and as it is our intereſt to be, they muſt not ſtay till they be compelled, perſuaded, or intreated by others to do them; but they muſt ſet upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due ſenſe of their

conſtant dependance upon him, and manifeſt obligations to him; yea, ſo as to take pleaſure in nothing in the world ſo much as in paying their reſpects and ſervice to Almighty God, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 14, 15, 17.

Now to encourage the rich to employ their eſtates thus in doing good, the Apoſtle adds in the laſt place, that this is the way to *lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* A ſtrange expreſſion! yea ſuch an one, that had not St. Paul himſelf ſpoke it, ſome would have been apt to have excepted againſt it for an error or miſtake. What, good works the foundation of eternal life? No, that is not the meaning of it; but that good works are the foundation of that bleſſed ſentence which they ſhall receive who are made partakers of eternal life, as is plain from our Saviour's own words, *Matth.* xxv. 34, 35, 36.

And verily, although there be no ſuch intrinſick value in good works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them; yet nothing can be more certain, than that God of his infinite mercy in Jeſus Chriſt, will ſo accept of them as to reward us for them in the world to come. For this our Saviour himſelf doth clearly intimate to us in the place before quoted; as alſo *Mat.* vi. 20. *Luke* xii. 33. *Luke* xvi. 9. that is, diſtribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful riches you have in this world in ſuch a way as is moſt pleaſing and acceptable unto God, that ſo he may be your friend, and receive you into everlaſting habitations, when theſe tranſient and unſtable riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to obſerve, that to do good with what we have, is the only way whereby to improve our eſtates for our own good, ſo as to be the better for them both in this and alſo in the world to come. The Rabbins have a good ſaying, that *barach hadjein*, good works, are the ſalt of riches, that which preſerves them from corruption and makes them ſavoury and acceptable unto God, as alſo uſeful and profitable to the owners; unleſs we do good with our eſtates, we forfeit our title to them by the non-payment of the rent-charge which God hath reſerved to himſelf upon them; and therefore we may juſtly expect every moment to be caſt out of poſſeſſion; or howſoever though he may forbear us a while, yea, ſo long as we are in this world, what good, what benefit, what comfort ſhall we have of our eſtates in the world to come? Certainly no more than the rich man in the goſpel had when he lay ſcorching in hell-fire, and had not ſo much as a

drop of water to cool his inflamed tongue. Whereas on the other ſide, if we do good with our eſtates, if we devote them to the ſervice of God, and to the relief of the poor, by this means we ſhall not only ſecure the poſſeſſion of them to ourſelves here, but ſhall alſo receive comfort and benefit from them in the world to come; ſo that our eſtates will not die with us, but we ſhall receive benefit by them, and have cauſe to bleſs God for them unto all eternity: The Apoſtle himſelf aſſuring us, that by this means we ſhall *lay up for ourſelves a good foundation for the time to come, ſo as to lay hold on eternal life.*

This one argument being duly weighed, I hope I need not uſe any more to perſuade men to do good with what they have, and to make the beſt uſe of it they can. For I know I write to Chriſtians, at leaſt to ſuch as profeſs themſelves to be ſo; and therefore to ſuch as believe there is another world beſides this we live in, and by conſequence that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have ſhewn, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right improvement of what God hath entruſted with us in this world. What then do the generality of men mean to be ſo ſlack and remiſs in laying hold of all opportunities of doing good! What, do they think it poſſible to loſe any thing they do for God? or do they think it poſſible to employ their eſtates better than for his ſervice and honour who gave them to us! I cannot believe they think ſo; and therefore muſt needs adviſe the rich again and again, not to lay up their talents in a napkin, but to uſe their eſtates to the beſt advantage for God and their own ſouls; ſo that when they go from hence into the other world, they may be received into eternal glory, with a *well done, good and faithful ſervants, enter into your maſter's joy.*

But fearing leſt theſe moral perſuaſions may not prevail ſo much upon my readers as I deſire they might, they muſt give me leave further to tell them, that I am here commanded to charge them that are rich in this world, to be rich alſo in good works: And therefore, ſeeing, as I have ſhewn, there are few but who in a ſcripture ſenſe are rich in this world; in obedience to this command which is here laid upon me, in the name of the moſt high God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God himſelf, he wills and requires all thoſe whom he hath bleſſed with riches in this world, That they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but that they put their whole truſt and confidence only in the liv-

ing God, whoſe all things are, and who gives us whatſoever we have: that they do good with what he hath put into their hands, laying it out upon works of piety towards him, and of charity to the poor, that his worſhip may be decently performed, and the poor liberally relieved; that they be rich in good works, ſtriving to excel each other in doing good in their generation; that they be ready every moment to diſtribute, and always willing to communicate to every good work, wherein they can pay their homage, and expreſs their thankfulneſs to him for what they have.

## *Thoughts upon Self-Denial.*

THE moſt glorious ſight, queſtionleſs, that was ever to be ſeen upon the face of the earth, was to ſee the Son of God here, to ſee the Supreme Being and governor of the world here; to ſee the Creator of all things converſing here with his own creatures; to ſee God himſelf with the nature and in the ſhape of man, walking about upon the ſurface of the earth; and diſcourſing with ſilly mortals here; and that with ſo much majeſty and humility mixed together, that every expreſſion might ſeem a demonſtration that he was both God and Man. It is true, we were not ſo happy as to ſee this bleſſed ſight; howſoever, it is our happineſs that we have heard of it, and have it ſo exactly deſcribed to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had ſeen it: Yea, our Saviour himſelf hath pronounced thoſe in a peculiar manner bleſſed, *who have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, John xx. 29. that is, who never ſaw Chriſt in the manger, nor in the temple, who never ſaw him proſtrate before his Father in the garden, nor faſtened by men unto his croſs; who never ſaw him preaching the goſpel nor working miracles to confirm it; who never ſaw him before his paſſion, nor after his reſurrection; and do as firmly believe whatſoever is recorded of him, as if they had ſeen it with their eyes. Such perſons our bleſſed Saviour himſelf aſſerts to be truly bleſſed, as having ſuch a faith as is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and *the evidence of things not ſeen*. Heb. xi. 1.

Hence therefore, although we lived not in our Saviour's time, and therefore ſaw him not do as never man did, nor heard him ſpeak as never man ſpake, we may notwithſtand-

ing be as bleſſed, or rather more bleſſed than they that did; If we do but give credit to what is aſſerted of him, and receive and believe what is repreſented to us in his holy goſpels, where by faith we may ſtill ſee him working miracles, and hear him declaring his will and pleaſure to his diſciples, as really as if we had then been by him. And therefore whatever we read in the goſpel that he ſpake, we are to hearken as diligently to it, as if we heard him ſpeak it with our own ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had received it from his own mouth; for ſo we do, though not immediately, yet by the infallible pen of them that did ſo. And ſeeing he never ſpake in vain, or to no purpoſe, nor ſuffered an idle or ſuperfluous word to proceed out of his ſacred and divine mouth; whatſoever he aſſerted, we are to look upon as neceſſary to be believed, becauſe he aſſerted it. And whatſoever he commanded, we are to look upon as neceſſary to be obſerved, becauſe he hath commanded it; for we muſt not think that his aſſertions are ſo frivolous, or his commands ſo impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other or no: No, if we expect to be juſtified and ſaved by him, he expects to be believed and obeyed by us, without which he will not look upon us as his diſciples, nor by conſequence as Chriſtians, but as ſtrangers and aliens to him, whatſoever our profeſſions and pretences are.

It is true, we live in an age wherein Chriſtianity in the general notion of it is highly courted, and all ſects and parties amongſt us making their pretences to it; whatſoever opinions or circumſtances they differ in, be ſure they all agree in the external profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, and by conſequence in the knowledge that they ought to be Chriſtians indeed. But I fear that men are generally miſtaken about the notion of true Chriſtianity, not thinking it to be ſo high and divine a thing as really it is; for if they had true and clear conceptions of it, they would never fancy themſelves to be Chriſtians, upon ſuch low and pitiful grounds as uſually they do, making as if Chriſtianity conſiſted in nothing elſe, but in the external performance of ſome few particular duties, and in adhering to them that profeſs it; whereas Chriſtianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature, than ſuch would have it; inſomuch, that did we but rightly underſtand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, ſo as to reſolve for the future, to the utmoſt of our power, to live up to it; to which could I be an inſtrument of perſuading any,

how happy ſhould I think myſelf? Howſoever it is my duty to endeavour it, and for that purpoſe I ſhall now clear up the true notion of Chriſtianity, that we may know, not what it is to be profeſſors and pretenders of Chriſtianity, but what it is to be real Chriſtians, and true diſciples of Chriſt Jeſus, ſuch as Chriſt will own for his in another world.

Now to know whom Chriſt will accept for his diſciples, our only way is to conſult Chriſt himſelf, and to conſider what it is that he requires of thoſe that follow him, in order to be his diſciples; a thing as eaſily underſtood, as it is generally diſregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Chriſt requires and enjoins all thoſe that would be his diſciples, to obſerve not only ſome few, but all the commands that he hath laid upon us. *Ye are my friends*, ſaith he, *and therefore my diſciples, if ye do whatſoever I command you*, John xv. 14. So that unleſs we do whatſoever he commands us, we are ſo far from being his diſciples, that we are indeed his enemies. Nay, they that would be his diſciples, muſt excel and ſurpaſs all others in virtue and good works, *Herein*, ſaith he, *is my Father glorified that ye bring forth much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples*, John xv. 8. yea, and continue in them too, *John* viii. 31. He tells us alſo, that they that would be his diſciples, *muſt love him above all things*; or rather, hate all things in compariſon of him, *Luke* xiv. 26. And *that they love one another, as he hath loved them*, John xiv. 35. To name no more; read but St. *Mat.* xvi. 24. and there you may ſee what it is to be a Chriſtian indeed, or what it is that Chriſt requires of thoſe who would be his diſciples. *If any man would come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs and follow me.* Did we but underſtand the true meaning of theſe words, and order our converſation accordingly, we ſhould both know what it is to be true Chriſtians, and really to be ſo ourſelves. For I think there is nothing that Chriſt requires of thoſe who deſire to be his diſciples, but we ſhould perform it, could we but obſerve what is here commanded: Which that we may all do, I ſhall endeavour to give the true meaning of them, and of every particular in them as they lie in order.

For, ſaith he, *If any man will come after me*, that is, If any man will be my diſciple; for maſters ye know uſe to go before ſcholars, and diſciples to follow after. And our Saviour here ſpeaks of himſelf under the notion of a maſter, that hath diſciples coming after him, and ſaith, that if any one would be one of his diſciples ſo as to go after him, *he muſt deny him-*

*ſelf, take up his croſs, and follow him.* So that here are three things which our bleſſed Saviour requires of thoſe that would be his diſciples, and by conſequence of us who profeſs to be ſo; for I dare ſay there is none of us but deſire to be a Chriſtian, or at leaſt to be thought ſo; for we all know and believe Jeſus Chriſt to be the only Saviour of mankind; that none can ſave us but he, and that there is none of us but he can ſave; and that all thoſe who truly come to him for pardon and ſalvation, ſhall moſt certainly have it: Hence it is that we would all be thought at leaſt ſo wiſe, and to have ſo much care of our own ſouls as to go after Chriſt and be his diſciples. I hope there are but few but who really deſire to be ſo. Yet I would not have any think that it is ſo eaſy a matter to be a diſciple of Chriſt, or a real and true Chriſtian, as the world would make it; no, we may aſſure ourſelves, that as it is the higheſt honour and happineſs we can attain unto, ſo we ſhall find it the hardeſt matter in the world to attain unto it; not in its own nature, but by reaſon of its contrariety to our natural temper and inclinations. For here we ſee what it is our bleſſed Saviour requires of thoſe that would go after him, even nothing leſs than to deny themſelves, take up their croſſes, and follow him. All which are far greater things than at the firſt ſight, or reading, they may ſeem to be.

For firſt, ſaith he, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf*, which being the firſt thing which Chriſt requires of thoſe that go after him, it is neceſſary that we ſearch more narrowly into the nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the reſt And therefore, for the opening of this, I ſhall not trouble the reader with the various expoſitions, and the divers opinions of learned men concerning theſe words, but only mind him in general, that the ſelf denial here ſpoken of is properly oppoſed to ſelf-love, or that corrupt and vicious habit of the ſoul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own fancies, wills, deſires, intereſts, and the like, before Chriſt himſelf, and what he is pleaſed either to promiſe to us, or require of us. And therefore, when he commands us to deny ourſelves, his will and pleaſure in general is this, that we do not indulge, or gratify ourſelves in any thing that ſtands in oppoſition againſt, and comes in competition with his intereſt in the world, or ours in him, howſoever near and dear it may be unto us. But to deny ourſelves whatſoever is pleaſing to ourſelves, if it be not ſo to God and Chriſt too, ſo as not to live to ourſelves, but

only unto him that died for us, to live as thoſe who are none of our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore ſhould glorify God both in our ſouls and in our bodies, which are his, 1 *Cor* vi. 19, 20. But ſeeing this is not only the firſt leſſon to be learnt by Chriſt's diſciples, but that which is neceſſarily required in order to whatſoever elſe he commands from us, I ſhall ſhew you more particularly what it is in yourſelves that you are to deny.

Firſt, you muſt deny your own reaſons in matters of divine revelation, ſo as to uſe them no farther than only to ſearch into the grounds and motives that we have to believe them to be revealed by God For this being either proved or ſuppoſed, we are not to ſuffer our reaſons to be too curious in ſearching into them, but believe them upon the word and teſtimony of God himſelf, who is the ſupreme truth, or verity itſelf.

For we who by all our art and cunning cannot underſtand the reaſons of the moſt common and obvious things in nature, muſt not think to comprehend the great myſteries of the goſpel, which, though they be not contrary to our reaſons, are infinitely above them: *For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. So that to the underſtanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath revealed to us, there is a great deal more required than what we have by nature, even the ſupernatural aſſiſtance of the Spirit himſelf that revealed them. And therefore, *if any man amongſt* us *ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. that is, he that would be wiſe unto ſalvation, muſt look upon himſelf as a fool, as one incapable by nature of underſtanding the things that belong unto his everlaſting peace, without both the revelation and aſſiſtance of God himſelf; and therefore muſt not rely upon his own judgment, but only upon God's teſtimony in what he doth believe, not believing what his reaſon, but what God's word tells him; looking upon it as reaſon enough why he ſhould believe it, becauſe God hath ſaid it.

I know this is an hard doctrine to fleſh and blood. For, as Job tells us, *vain man would be wiſe, though man be born like a wild aſs's colt*, Job xi. 12. Though by nature we be never ſo fooliſh, vain, and ignorant, underſtanding the great myſteries of the goſpel, no more than a *wild aſs's colt* doth a mathematical demonſtration, yet howſoever we would fain be thought very wiſe men: yea ſo wiſe as to be able to com-

prehend matters of the higheſt, yea of an infinite nature, within the narrow compaſs of our finite and ſhallow capacities. But this is that which we muſt deny ourſelves in, if we deſire to be Chriſt's diſciples, ſo as to acquieſce in his word, and believe what he aſſerts, only becauſe he aſſerts it, without ſuffering our reaſon to interpoſe, but looking upon his word as more than all the reaſons and arguments in the world beſides.

2. You muſt deny your own wills. Our wills, it is true, at firſt were made upright and perfect, every way correſpondent to the will of God himſelf, ſo as to will what he wills, that is, what is really good; and to nill what he nills, that is, what is really evil. But being now perverted, and corrupt with ſin, our wills are naturally inclined to the evil which they ſhould be averſe from, and averſe from the good which they ſhould be inclined to. So that inſtead of chuſing the good and refuſing the evil, we are generally apt to chuſe the evil and refuſe the good: Yet that for all our wills are thus crooked and perverſe, we cannot endure to have them croſſed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own wills in every thing, ſo as neither to do any thing ourſelves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but juſt as ourſelves will, who will uſually juſt contrary to what we ſhould. But now they that would be Chriſt's diſciples, muſt not be thus ſelf willed, but deny themſelves the fulfilling of their own wills, when it doth not conſiſt with the will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and maſter hath taught us by his example as well as precept, ſaying, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheleſs, not my will but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42. Where we may obſerve that our bleſſed Saviour, as man, could not but have a natural averſeneſs from death, as all men by nature have, and that without ſin. And though Chriſt's will, as man, was never ſo pure and perfect, yet he only ſubmits it to the will of God. He manifeſted indeed that it was the will of that nature which he had aſſumed, not to ſuffer death, ſaying, *if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*; but he ſhews withall, that the will of man muſt ſtill be ſubject to the will of God; and that man, even as man, muſt deny his own will, whenſoever it runneth not exactly paralel with God's, ſaying, *nevertheleſs, not my will but thine be done.*

And if Chriſt himſelf denied his own pure and perfect will, that his Father's might be accompliſhed, how much more cauſe have we to deny our wills, which, by nature, are always contrary to his will, yea, and to our own good too, prefer-

ring generally that which is evil and deſtructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And verily a great part of true Chriſtianity conſiſteth in thus reſigning our wills to God's, not minding ſo much which way our own inclinations bend, as what his pleaſure and command is. A notable inſtance whereof we have in old Eli, who queſtionleſs could not but be very willing that the iniquity of his ſons might be forgiven, and his family proſper in the world; yet howſoever when God had manifeſted his pleaſure to him, that his houſe ſhould be deſtroyed, he ſubmitted his own wholly unto God's, ſaying, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And whoſoever of us would be Chriſt's diſciple indeed, muſt be ſure thus to deny and renounce his own will, whenſoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, ſo as even to will, that not his own will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and maſter himſelf hath taught us each day to pray, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* And whoſoever hath learned this art of making his own will bow and ſtoop to God's, hath made a very good progreſs in the Chriſtian religion, eſpecially in that part of it which requires us to deny ourſelves.

And ſeeing we muſt deny our wills, we muſt needs deny our affections too, which are indeed nothing elſe but the ſeveral motions of the will towards good and evil; but uſually they are ſo diſorderly and irregular, as to place themſelves upon objects directly oppoſite to what they were deſigned for; for that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; deſire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to deſire; rejoice in thoſe things which we ought to grieve for, and are grieved at ſuch things which we ought to rejoice in: So that if we ſuffer our affections to move according to their natural tendency and corrupt inclinations, we ſhall be ſo far from going after Chriſt, that we ſhall continually be running from him. And therefore it muſt be our great care and ſtudy to bridle our affections, deny them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper objects; yea, and to deny ourſelves too the lawful uſe of ſuch things as our affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for example; it is lawful, yea our duty to love our relations, but if our love to them becomes exorbitant, ſo as to love them more than God, our love to them muſt be turned into hatred in compariſon of our love to him, *Luke* xiv. 26. And whatſoever lawful thing it is that we take pleaſure in, if once we find that our pleaſure in that extinguiſheth, or but damps that

prehend matters of the higheſt, yea of an infinite nature, within the narrow compaſs of our finite and ſhallow capacities. But this is that which we muſt deny ourſelves in, if we deſire to be Chriſt's diſciples, ſo as to acquieſce in his word, and believe what he aſſerts, only becauſe he aſſerts it, without ſuffering our reaſon to interpoſe, but looking upon his word as more than all the reaſons and arguments in the world beſides.

2. You muſt deny your own wills. Our wills, it is true, at firſt were made upright and perfect, every way correſpondent to the will of God himſelf, ſo as to will what he wills, that is, what is really good; and to nill what he nills, that is, what is really evil. But being now perverted, and corrupt with ſin, our wills are naturally inclined to the evil which they ſhould be averſe from, and averſe from the good which they ſhould be inclined to. So that inſtead of chuſing the good and refuſing the evil, we are generally apt to chuſe the evil and refuſe the good: Yet that for all our wills are thus crooked and perverſe, we cannot endure to have them croſſed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own wills in every thing, ſo as neither to do any thing ourſelves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but juſt as ourſelves will, who will uſually juſt contrary to what we ſhould. But now they that would be Chriſt's diſciples, muſt not be thus ſelf willed, but deny themſelves the fulfilling of their own wills, when it doth not conſiſt with the will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and maſter hath taught us by his example as well as precept, ſaying, *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheleſs, not my will but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42. Where we may obſerve that our bleſſed Saviour, as man, could not but have a natural averſeneſs from death, as all men by nature have, and that without ſin. And though Chriſt's will, as man, was never ſo pure and perfect, yet he only ſubmits it to the will of God. He manifeſted indeed that it was the will of that nature which he had aſſumed, not to ſuffer death, ſaying, *if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*; but he ſhews withall, that the will of man muſt ſtill be ſubject to the will of God; and that man, even as man, muſt deny his own will, whenſoever it runneth not exactly paralel with God's, ſaying, *nevertheleſs, not my will but thine be done.*

And if Chriſt himſelf denied his own pure and perfect will, that his Father's might be accompliſhed, how much more cauſe have we to deny our wills, which, by nature, are always contrary to his will, yea, and to our own good too, prefer-

ring generally that which is evil and deſtructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And verily a great part of true Chriſtianity conſiſteth in thus reſigning our wills to God's, not minding ſo much which way our own inclinations bend, as what his pleaſure and command is. A notable inſtance whereof we have in old Eli, who queſtionleſs could not but be very willing that the iniquity of his ſons might be forgiven, and his family proſper in the world; yet howſoever when God had manifeſted his pleaſure to him, that his houſe ſhould be deſtroyed, he ſubmitted his own wholly unto God's, ſaying, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And whoſoever of us would be Chriſt's diſciple indeed, muſt be ſure thus to deny and renounce his own will, whenſoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, ſo as even to will, that not his own will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and maſter himſelf hath taught us each day to pray, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* And whoſoever hath learned this art of making his own will bow and ſtoop to God's, hath made a very good progreſs in the Chriſtian religion, eſpecially in that part of it which requires us to deny ourſelves.

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pleaſure which we uſed, or ought to have in God, we are to deny ourſelves ſuch pleaſures as theſe are, and rather deſpiſe ourſelves than God.

Yea, we muſt deny ourſelves moreover the uſe and enjoyment of our eſtates and earthly poſſeſſions, whenſoever they come into competition with his glory: So that if it comes to that point, that we muſt either leave our eſtates to enjoy Chriſt, or leave Chriſt to enjoy our eſtates; we muſt be willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatſoever elſe we have rather than our intereſt in Chriſt. For indeed he is not worthy to be Chriſt's diſciple that doth not prefer him before all things elſe; neither he that loves the world at all in compariſon of Chriſt: *For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John ii. 15. And therefore he that would be Chriſt's diſciple indeed, muſt fix his heart ſo faſt on Chriſt, that it hang looſe and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concerned about them, than as if he had them not. So that though he have all things beſide Chriſt, he muſt have nothing but him, or at leaſt in compariſon of him; yea, be ready to part with all, that he may gain Chriſt. And though many of us may think this an hard ſaying, we may aſſure ourſelves, it is no more than what we muſt do, if we deſire to be Chriſt's diſciple, *Luke* xiv. 33.

Furthermore, we muſt deny ourſelves thoſe ſins eſpecially, and luſts which we have or do ſtill indulge ourſelves in; for thus the goſpel teacheth you in a particular manner, *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, Tit. ii. 12. And therefore we in vain pretend to be true Chriſtians ſo long as we live in any one known ſin with any love unto it, or delight in it. I ſuppoſe none of my readers guilty of all ſins, and I fear there are few but live in ſome. No man but may be naturally averſe from ſome ſins, but it is very rare to find one that is inclined to none; for ordinarily ever man hath his darling, his beloved ſin, his own ſin, as David himſelf once had, though he afterwards kept himſelf from it, *Pſal.* xviii. 23. So I fear none of my readers but have ſome ſin, which he may in a peculiar manner call his own, as being that which his thoughts run moſt upon, and his deſires are carried moſt unto, which he labours moſt after, and takes moſt pleaſure in, which he is moſt loth to be reproved for, and moſt eaſily overcome by. Now this and whatſoever other ſins any of us are addicted to, we muſt wholly leave and utterly renounce

if ever we desire to be Christ's disciples. And therefore so long as any of us live in any known sin, as in pride or prodigality, in oppression or covetousness, in malice or uncleanness, in drunkenness, uncharitableness, or any other sin whatsoever, we must not think ourselves to be Christians indeed, Christ will never own us for his disciples; for so long as we live in any known sin, it is that sin, not Christ, that is our master; and therefore if we would list ourselves into his service, we must be sure to deny ourselves whatsoever we know to be offensive to him.

There is still another thing behind wherein we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ, and that is, we must deny and renounce all our self-righteousness, and all hopes and confidences from ourselves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of self-denial; for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own nets, to burn incense to our own drags, to boast of our own good works, and to pride ourselves with the conceit of our own righteousness. Though we be never so sinful, we would not be thought to be so, but would very fain be counted righteous, not only by men, but by God himself, for something or other which ourselves do; though when all comes to all, we know not what that should be; but howsoever the pride of our hearts is such, that we are loth to go out of ourselves to look for righteousness, to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reason that justification by faith in Christ hath had so many adversaries in the world; mankind in general being so much in love with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilify their own obedience and good works, so much as to think they stand in need of any other righteousness besides their own, as if their own righteousness was so perfect, that God himself could find no fault with it, nor make any exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous persons for it.

Whereas, alas! there is not the best action that ever a mere mortal did, but if examined by the strict rules of justice, it is as far from being good, yea, so far, that God himself may justly pronounce it evil, and by consequence condemn the person that did it, for doing of it. And therefore I cannot wonder what it is that any man doth or can do, for which he can in reason be justified before God, our very righteousness being, as the prophet tells, *but as filthy rags*, and our most holy performances fraught with sin and imper-

fection, and therefore ſo far from juſtifying us, that we may juſtly be condemned for them; but this mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our hearts being ſuch, that by all means we muſt have ſomething in ourſelves whereof to glory before God himſelf. But woe be to that perſon who hath no other righteouſneſs but his own, wherein to appear before the judge of the whole world, for however ſpecious his actions may ſeem to men, they will be adjudged ſins before the eternal God.

He therefore that would come to Chriſt, although he muſt labour after righteouſneſs to the utmoſt of his power, yet when he has done all, he muſt renounce it and look upon himſelf as an unprofitable ſervant: *For Chriſt came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Matth. ix. 13. that is, *He came not to call ſuch perſons as think they have righteouſneſs enough of their own to ſerve their turns, for ſuch perſons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them; but he calls ſinners, ſuch as may perhaps be as righteous as the others, but they do not think themſelves to be ſo, but look upon themſelves as undone for ever unleſs they have ſomething elſe to truſt to, than their own good works and obedience to the moral law.* Such perſons therefore Chriſt came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find reſt and righteouſneſs in him; and if any of us deſire to go after Chriſt, ſo as to be his diſciple, we muſt be ſure to look upon ourſelves as ſinners, as deſerving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatſoever we have done; we muſt renounce all our own righteouſneſs, and be ſo far from depending upon it, as to think we have none to depend upon, for ſo really we have not. And when we have laid aſide all thoughts of our own righteouſneſs, as to the matter of juſtification before God, then and not till then, ſhall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteouſneſs which is by faith in Chriſt. Thus St. *Paul*, though he had as much, yea, more reaſon to truſt in the fleſh or in himſelf than others; for himſelf ſaith, *That as touching the righteouſneſs of the law, he was blameleſs*, Phil. iii. 6. *Yet*, ſaith he, *what things were gain to me*, thoſe *I counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord. For whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which*

*is of God by faith*, v. 7, 8, 9. Thus therefore it is that all thoſe muſt do who deſire to be as St. *Paul* was, real diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; as we muſt forſake our ſins, ſo we muſt renounce our righteouſneſs too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of ſelf denial, thus to deny ourſelves all that pride, pleaſure and confidence, which we uſed to take in the thoughts of our own righteouſneſs and obedience to the law of God; but we muſt remember that the firſt thing which our Saviour enjoins thoſe that come after him, is to deny themſelves.

Thus I have ſhewn what it is in ourſelves that we muſt deny, and how it is that we muſt deny ourſelves, if we deſire to go after Chriſt. We muſt deny ourſelves the curioſity of ſearching too much into the myſteries of the goſpel, by the light of our own clouded reaſon; we muſt deny our ſelf-conceit, our ſelf-love, ſelf-intereſt, ſelf-confidence, and whatſoever proceeds from and terminates in our ſenſual and ſinful ſelves, ſo as to have no delight in, nor dependance upon ourſelves; yea we muſt ſo deny ourſelves, as to be quite taken off of our former ſelves, and become other creatures than what we were. Thus St. Ambroſe explains theſe words, ſaying, "Seipſum ſibi homo abneget et totus mutetur, Let a man "deny himſelf to himſelf, ſo as to be wholly changed from "what he was." But then you will ſay, what need is there of all this trouble; what reaſon can be given that a man muſt deny himſelf before he can be a true Chriſtian?

To this I anſwer, it is reaſon enough that Chriſt hath commanded us to do it; and ſurely he beſt knows whom he will accept of as his diſciples, and what is neceſſary to be done in order to our being ſo: And he hath ſaid in plain terms, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf*, implying, that he that doth not deny himſelf connot go after him.

But beſides that, there is an impoſſiblity in the thing itſelf, that any one ſhould be a true Chriſtian, or go after Chriſt, and not deny himſelf, as may be eaſily perceived, if they will but conſider what true Chriſtianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Chriſtian. A true Chriſtian, we know, is one that lives by faith, and not by ſight: *That looks not at the things which are ſeen, but at thoſe things which are not ſeen*; that believes whatſoever Chriſt hath ſaid, truſteth on whatſoever he hath promiſed, and obeyeth whatſoever he hath commanded; that receiveth Chriſt as his only prieſt to make atonement for him, as his only prophet to inſtruct, and as his only Lord and Maſter to rule and govern him. In a word, a Chriſtian is one that gives up himſelf and all he hath

to Chriſt, who gave himſelf and all that he hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true Chriſtianity implies and ſuppoſes the denial of ourſelves, without which it is as impoſſible for a man to be a Chriſtian, as it is for a ſubject to be rebellious and loyal to his prince at the ſame time; and therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary that we go out of ourſelves before we can go to him, we muſt ſtrip ourſelves of our very ſelves before we can put on Chriſt; for Chriſt himſelf hath told us that *no man can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other*, Matth. vi. 24. We *cannot ſerve* God *and Mammon*, Chriſt and ourſelves too; ſo that we muſt either deny ourſelves to go after Chriſt, or elſe deny Chriſt to go after ourſelves, ſo as to mind our own ſelfiſh ends and deſigns in the world.

Wherefore I hope I need not uſe any other arguments to perſuade any to deny themſelves in the ſenſe already explained; I dare ſay there is none amongſt us but would willingly be what we profeſs, even a real Chriſtian, and ſo go after Chriſt here, as to come to him hereafter. But we have now ſeen how Chriſt himſelf told us, that *we muſt deny ourſelves*, if we deſire to ſerve and enjoy him: And verily it is an hard caſe if we cannot deny ourſelves for him who ſo far denied himſelf for us, as to lay down his own life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himſelf, yea, who himſelf was the true God, ſo far denied himſelf as to become man, yea, *a man of ſorrow and acquainted with griefs*, for us; and cannot we deny ourſelves ſo much as a fancy, a conceit, a ſin or luſt for him? How then can we expect that he ſhould own us for his friends, his ſervants or diſciples? No, he will never do it, neither can we in reaſon expect that he ſhould give himſelf and all the merits of his death and paſſion unto us, ſo long as we think much to give ourſelves to him, or to deny ourſelves for him. And therefore if we deſire to be made partakers of thoſe glorious things which he hath purchaſed with his own moſt precious blood for the ſons of men; let us begin here, indulge our fleſh no longer, but deny ourſelves whatſoever God hath been pleaſed to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each day more and more to live above ourſelves, above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world, live as thoſe who believe and profeſs that they are none of their own, but Chriſt's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preſervation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath pur-

chaſed and redeemed us with his own blood. And therefore, let us deny ourſelves for the future to our very ſelves, whoſe we are not, and devote ourſelves to him whoſe alone we are; by this we ſhall manifeſt ourſelves to be Chriſt's diſciples indeed, eſpecially if we do not only deny ourſelves, but alſo take up our croſs and follow him; which brings me to the ſecond thing which our bleſſed Saviour here requires of thoſe who would go after him, even *to take up their croſs*.

Where, by the croſs, we are to underſtand whatſoever troubles or calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our duty to God or man, which they that would go after Chriſt muſt take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor ſinking under them, for we muſt not think that Chriſt invites us to an earthly paradiſe of idleneſs or outward pleaſure, as if we had nothing to do or to ſuffer for him: For even as men we cannot but find many croſſes in the world, but as Chriſtians we muſt expect more, for Chriſt himſelf hath told us, *that in the world we ſhall have tribulation*, John xvi. 33. And therefore whatſoever we meet with, is no more than what we are to look for; eſpecially if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub, for God himſelf hath told us that it is *through many tribulations* that we muſt *enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Acts xiv. 25. And therefore we muſt not think to be carried up to heaven with the breath of popular applauſe, nor to ſwim through a deluge of carnal pleaſures into the haven of everlaſting happineſs. No, we muſt look to be toſſed to and fro in this world, as in a raging and tempeſtuous ocean, and never look for perpetual calmneſs and tranquillity, until we have got above the clouds, yea, even above the ſun and ſtars themſelves. This world was always a world of trouble, and ever will be; its very friends, and they that have their portion here, can find no quiet nor ſatisfaction in it; but the diſciples of Chriſt *they are not of this world*, as Chriſt himſelf tell us, *John* xvii. 14. And therefore no wonder if the world frowns more upon them than others: The way they walk in is oppoſite to the world, it is enmity itſelf to the fleſh, and therefore no wonder if they meet with ſo much enmity and oppoſition here; the way wherein they go after Chriſt is a croſs way, it is croſs to ſin, croſs to ſatan, croſs to the world, croſs to our very ſelves as we are by nature, and by conſequence croſs to all men in the world but Chriſt's diſciples; and therefore it is no wonder they meet with ſo

many croſſes in it, But howſoever, if we deſire to go after Chriſt, he hath told us before-hand what we muſt expect; as he hath borne the croſs before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea, we muſt not only bear it, but take it up too: Not that we ſhould run ourſelves into danger, but that we ſhould baulk no duty to avoid it, ſo as to be willing and ready to undergo the greateſt ſuffering, rather than to commit the leaſt ſin, and to run the greateſt danger rather than neglect the ſmalleſt duty. If whilſt we are walking in the narrow path of holineſs, there happens to lie a croſs in the way, we muſt not go on one ſide nor on the other ſide of it out of the path we walk in, neither muſt we kick and ſpurn it, but we muſt patiently take it up, and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at firſt, it will ſoon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progreſs towards heaven.

But here we muſt have a great care to underſtand our Saviour's meaning, and ſo our own duty aright; for we muſt not think that every trouble we meet with in the world is the croſs of Chriſt, for we may ſuffer for our fancy or humour, or perhaps for our ſin and tranſgreſſion of the laws of God or men; and if ſo, it is our own croſs, not Chriſt's which we take upon us; we may thank ourſelves for it: I am ſure Chriſt hath no cauſe to thank us: *For this is thank-worthy*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully*, 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. And therefore the duty which our Saviour here impoſeth on us in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to ſuffer what we can for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the goſpel, and that we omit no duty, nor commit any ſin for fear of ſuffering; nor think ſo much of any trouble that befals us for Chriſt's ſake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the Apoſtles rejoiced, that *they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name*, Acts v. 41. Which was a clear inſtance of their performing the duty here enjoined both them and us, under the name of *taking up our croſs*.

And I hope there is none of us can take it ill, that Chriſt hath impoſed ſo ſevere a duty upon us; for we may aſſure ourſelves he requires no more of us than what himſelf hath undergone before, ſo that we can ſuffer nothing for him but what he hath ſuffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our hearts? So had he, *Mat.* xxvi. 38. Have we pains and tortures in our bodies? So had he, *Mat.* xxvii. 29, 30. Are we derided and ſcoffed at? So was he, *Mat.*

xxvii. 31. Are we arraigned and condemned, yea, do we ſuffer death itſelf? It is no more than what our Lord and Maſter hath done before. And let us remember what he told us when he was upon the earth, *The diſciple is not above his maſter, nor the ſervant above his Lord*, Mat. x. 24. If we be Chriſt's diſciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world than Chriſt himſelf did, neither indeed can we fare ſo bad; for it is impoſſible that we ſhould undergo ſo much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the ſufferings of men, his the ſufferings of one who was God as well as man; whereby ſufferings in general are ſanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the perſon of the Son of God; ſo that it can be now no diſparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea, death itſelf, or any other calamity, whatſoever in this world, ſeeing the Son of God himſelf, he that made the world, underwent the ſame while himſelf was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to ſtoop down and take up the croſs of Chriſt, as conſidering that Chriſt hath borne it before us, hath ſo bleſſed and ſanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, and advantageous, yea, and a pleaſant croſs, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully, and conſtantly, as they ought to do, eſpecially ſeeing it is ſuch a croſs as leads unto a crown; whatſoever we can do or ſuffer for Chriſt here, will be fully recompenſed with glory hereafter; and therefore inſtead of being troubled to take up our croſs, we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take up.

Thus we ſee in few words, what it is which our Saviour commands us, when he enjoins us to deny ourſelves, and take up our croſs; even that we do not gratify ourſelves in any thing that is ungrateful unto him, nor grudge to take up any croſs, or ſuffer any trouble we meet with in the world for his ſake, thinking nothing too dear to forſake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for him, who thought not his own life too dear, nor the croſs itſelf too heavy to bear for us. What now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's pleaſure we ſhould all reſolve to do it? There is none of us but hope and deſire to be ſaved by him; but that we can never be, unleſs we obſerve what he hath preſcribed in order to our ſalvation: And amongſt other things, we ſee how he hath commanded us to deny ourſelves, and to take up our croſs. As any of us therefore deſire to be Chriſtians indeed, ſo as to ſee Chriſt's face with comfort in another world, let us bethink ourſelves ſeriouſly

what ſins we have hitherto indulged ourſelves in. I fear there are but few, if any amongſt us, but are conſcious to themſelves, that they have, and do ſtill live, either in the conſtant neglect of ſome known duty, or elſe in the frequent commiſſion of ſome beloved ſin: What that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to men's own conſciences; only I deſire them to deal faithfully with their own ſouls, and not ſuffer themſelves to be fooled into a fond and vain perſuaſion that they have any intereſt in Chriſt, or are truly his diſciples, until they deny themſelves that ſin, whatſoever it is, which they have hitherto indulged themſelves in. And let us not think that we ſhall deny ourſelves any real pleaſure or profit, by renouncing our ſins; for what pleaſure can we have in diſpleaſing God, or profit in loſing our own ſouls? No, we ſhall gratify ourſelves, more than we can imagine, by denying ourſelves, as much as we are able, whatſoever is offenſive or diſpleaſing unto God; for we may be ſure, he that came into the world on purpoſe to ſave us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good; neither would he ever have obliged us to deny ourſelves, if we could have been ſaved without it; and as for the croſs, that he was ſo well acquainted with, that he would never have impoſed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indiſpenſably neceſſary for us. And therefore, if we be what we pretend, real and true Chriſtians, let us manifeſt it to the world, and to our own conſciences, by denying ourſelves whatſoever Chriſt hath denied us, and by obſerving whatſoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any croſs that he for his own ſake ſhall ſuffer to be laid upon us; ſtill remembering, that ſelf-denial, tho' it be unpleaſant, is a moſt neceſſary duty; and the croſs, tho' it be never ſo heavy, is but ſhort, and hath nothing leſs than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all thoſe ſhall moſt certainly obtain, who deny themſelves.

## *Thoughts upon ſtriving to enter into the Strait Gate.*

AS certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we ſhall all be in another world: either in a world of happineſs, or elſe in a world of miſery; or, if you will, either heaven or in hell. For theſe are the two only places which

all mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, muſt live in for evermore, ſome in the one, ſome in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here; and therefore it is worth the while to take a view and proſpect now and then of both theſe places, and it will not be amiſs if we do it now; for which end, I deſire the reader, in his ſerious and compoſed thoughts, to attend me firſt into the celeſtial manſions, above yonder glorious ſun and the ſtars themſelves, where not only the cherubins and ſeraphins, angels and archangels, but many alſo of our brethren, the ſons of men, at this very moment are enjoying the preſence, and ſinging forth the praiſes of the moſt High God. There are the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, perfect in themſelves, and perfect in all their actions, perfectly free from all both ſin and miſery, perfectly free of all true grace and glory, all their faculties being reduced to that moſt perfect and excellent frame and conſtitution, that their underſtandings are continually taken up with the contemplations of the ſupreme truth, and their wills in the embracement of their chiefeſt good; ſo that all the inclinations of their ſouls reſt in God as in their proper center, in whom by conſequence they enjoy as much as they can deſire, yea as much as they can be made capable of deſiring: For all thoſe infinite perfections that are concentered in God himſelf, are now in their poſſeſſion, to ſolace and delight themſelves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them; by which means they are as happy as God himſelf can make them; inſomuch that at this very moment methinks we may all behold them ſo raviſhed, ſo tranſported with their celeſtial joys, that it may juſtly ſtrike us into admiration, how ever creatures which were once ſinful, could be made ſo pure, ſo perfect, and altogether ſo happy as they are. And could we but leave our bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the *New Jeruſalem* that is above, we could not but be raviſhed and tranſported at the very ſight both of the place and inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greateſt emperors of this world, with nothing leſs than crowns of glory on their heads, and ſceptres of righteouſneſs in their hands; where they think of nothing but the glory of God, diſcourſe of nothing but praiſing him, do nothing but adore and worſhip him: In a word, whatſoever is agreeable to our natures, whatſoever is deſireable to our ſouls, whatſoever can any way conduce to make men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed, by all and every perſon that is in heaven. Whereas on the other ſide, if we bring down our thoughts

from heaven, and ſend them as low as hell, to conſider the moſt deplorable eſtate and condition of thoſe who inhabit the regions of darkneſs, them we ſhall find as miſerable as the others are happy; not only in that they are deprived of the viſion and fruition of the chiefeſt good, but likewiſe in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as infinite juſtice can adjudge them to, and infinite power inflict upon them, inſomuch that could we lay our ear to the entrance of that bottomleſs pit, what howlings and ſhriekings ſhould we hear, what weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth in the midſt of thoſe infernal flames, where, as our Saviour himſelf tells us, *The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44. That is, where the conſciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former ſins, and the fire of God's wrath is continually burning in them, never to be quenched or abated: For certainly as the ſmiles and favour of the eternal God conſtitute the joys of heaven, ſo do his frowns and anger make up the flames of hell. To ſee him that made us diſpleaſed with us, to ſee mercy itſelf to frown upon us, to ſee the great and all-glorious Creator of the world, the chiefeſt good, to look angrily upon us, and to ſhew himſelf offended at us, and incenſed againſt us! Methinks the very thoughts of it are ſufficient to make the ſtouteſt heart amongſt us tremble. But then what ſhall we think of thoſe poor ſouls that ſee and feel it? What ſhall we think of them? Queſtionleſs they are more miſerable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot poſſibly conceive either the greatneſs of heaven's glory, or the ſharpneſs of hell's torments; only this we know, and may be certain of, that whatſoever is ungrateful to their minds, whatſoever is troubleſome to their thoughts, whatſoever is contrary to their deſires, whatſoever is painful to their bodies, or whatſoever is or can be deſtructive and tormenting to their ſouls, that, all they who are once in hell ſhall fear and feel, and that for ever.

But this is too ſad and doleful a ſubject to inſiſt on long, neither ſhould I have mentioned it, but for our own good, and to prepare us the better, both for the underſtanding and improving the advice of our Saviour, *Matt.* vii. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate*, &c. The meaning of which words, in brief, may be reduced to theſe three heads:

*Firſt*, That it is an eaſy matter to go to hell, that place of torments we have now been deſcribing, and by conſequence that many go thither; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leadeth thither.

*Secondly*, That it is a hard and difficult thing to get to heaven, that place of joys we before ſpoke of, and by conſequence that but few get thither; *For ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to it.*

*Laſtly*, Howſoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have us ſtrive to get to heaven, ſo as to paſs through that ſtrait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leadeth unto life.

As for the firſt, that the gate is wide, and the way broad that leads to hell, or that it is an eaſy matter to go thither, I need not uſe many words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it, I dare ſay there is ſcarce any one but believes it, yea, and hath oftentimes found it too true by experience, even that it is an eaſy matter to ſin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to hell; ſo broad, that they who walk in it can find no bounds or limits in it, wherewithin to contain themſelves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are ſtill in the ready way to ruin and deſtruction. And uſually it is as plain as broad, ſo that men rarely meet with any roughneſs or trouble in it, but rather with all the pleaſures and delights which they deſire, who look no higher than to pleaſe the fleſh; yea, whatſoever it is that they naturally deſire, they ſtill meet with it in the road to hell; and whatſoever is ungrateful and irkſome to them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of ſin. There are no croſſes to be taken up, no ſelf to be denied, but rather indulged and gratified; there are no ſuch tedious and troubleſome things as examining our hearts, and mortifying our luſts, as praying or hearing, as faſting or watching: Theſe are only to be found in the narrow path that leads to heaven; the broad way to hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being ſtrewed all along with carnal pleaſures and ſenſual delights, with popular applauſe, and earthly riches, and ſuch fine things as ſilly mortals uſe to be taken with.

And hence it is, that our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide gate that leads to ruin, becauſe they ſee not whither it leads, but they ſee the baits and allurements which are in it, which they cannot but croud about as fiſhes about the hook, or as flies about a candle, till they be deſtroyed. Yea, this way to deſtruction is ſo broad, that almoſt all the world is continually walking in it; the gate ſo wide, that thouſands at a time paſs through it. And therefore we may well conclude it is a very eaſy thing to go to that place of torments, which even now we ſpeak of, or rather that it is an hard, a difficult matter to keep out of

it, the way being ſo narrow that carries from it, that it is a difficult thing to find it; and the way ſo broad that leads unto it, that none can miſs of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

But I hope none of my readers have, God forbid they ſhould have, a mind to go to hell; their taking religious books into their hands is rather an argument that they have a mind to go to heaven, and read on purpoſe to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all opportunities of finding out the way to bliſs; for we may aſſure ourſelves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but much more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, ſo that there is ſcarce any path to be ſeen, moſt people go either on one ſide, or elſe on the other ſide of it; ſome running into the by-paths of error, hereſy or ſchiſm, others into the broad way of prophaneneſs or ſecurity: Inſomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right path that leads directly to the *New Jeruſalem*, the place of reſt. I ſpeak not this of myſelf; no, *Chriſt* himſelf, that came from heaven to earth, on purpoſe to ſhew us the way from earth to heaven, ſaith, That *ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

And let not any think that *Chriſt* ſpoke theſe words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what he ſaid or no. For queſtionleſs, one great reaſon why ſo few ever come to heaven, is becauſe moſt think it ſo eaſy to get thither, that they need not take any care or pains about it. For even amongſt ourſelves, to whom the goſpel is ſo clearly revealed, men generally think if they do but read the ſcriptures, and hear ſermons, and live honeſtly with their neighbours, ſo as to harm no body, but pay every one their own, then they ſhall as ſurely come to heaven as if they were there already; nay, many are ſo ſimple as to think that their ſeparation from the church militant on earth is the way to bring them to the church triumphant in heaven; and others ſo ridiculous as to believe that a death-bed repentance is ſufficient to entitle them to eternal life. But ſtay a while: It is not ſo eaſy a matter to get to heaven. Indeed to me it ſeems one of the greateſt myſteries in the world, that ever any man or woman ſhould come thither; that ſuch ſinful worms as we are, who are born in ſin, and live ſo long in ſin and rebellion againſt the great Creator of the world, ſhould ever be received ſo far into his grace and favour as to enjoy life and eternal happineſs in him. And did we look no farther than ourſelves, we might juſtly deſpair of ever obtaining ſuch tranſcendent glory which

we are altogether ſo unworthy of. But the goodneſs of God both is and hath been ſo great to mankind, that there is none of us but, in and through the merits of Chriſt Jeſus, is in a capacity of it. Yet we muſt not think that it is ſo eaſy a thing to come to heaven, as the devil, the world, and our own baſe hearts, would perſuade us it is: If we do, we are never likely to come thither; no, we may aſſure ourſelves, as heaven is the greateſt good that we can attain, ſo doth it require our greateſt care and ſtudy imaginable to attain it.

This therefore is that which I ſhall endeavour to convince men of, and account myſelf happy if I can do it. For I dare ſay, there is none of us but deſires to ſee Chriſt in glory, and to be happy with him and in him for ever; but that we can never be, unleſs we do whatſoever is required of us in order to it; and if we think it is ſo eaſy a matter to do whatſoever is required of us, I have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect that we never yet made trial of it, nor ſet ourſelves ſeriouſly upon the performance of thoſe duties which are enjoined us here in reference to our being happy for ever. For if we have ſet upon it in good earneſt, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reaſon of our natural averſeneſs from what is good, and inclinations unto evil. For we all know, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. So that holineſs is the way, the direct and only way, that leads to heaven; neither is there any way imaginable of being happy hereafter, but by being holy here. And though it be an eaſy thing to profeſs holineſs, and to perform ſome external acts of it; yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, ſo as we muſt be if ever we would go to heaven, this is every whit as difficult as the other is eaſy.

For firſt I ſuppoſe all will grant that he is not truly holy that lives in any known ſin, as the Apoſtle alſo intimates, ſaying, He that *is born of God doth not commit ſin*, 1 John iii. 9. And therefore he that ſtill indulgeth himſelf in the commiſſion of any known ſin, he is not yet regenerate, or born of God, he is not truly holy. So that to our being ſo holy here, as that we may be happy hereafter, it is abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary that we forſake and avoid to the utmoſt of our power whatſoever is offenſive unto God, and contrary to his laws. But it is as difficult as it is neceſſary to forſake ſin as we ought to do. It is an eaſy matter, I confeſs, to rail at ſin, to backbite others, to blame ourſelves for it. But that is not the buſineſs; but to loath our ſins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor them as much

as ever we deſired them, and to be as much averſe from them as ever we were inclined to them; to forſake ſin as ſin, and by conſequence all ſins whatſoever, one as well as another; ſo as to deny ourſelves all that pleaſure we were wont to take in any ſin, and all that ſeeming profit which we uſed to receive by it, and that too out of love to God, and fear of his diſpleaſure: This is to forſake ſin indeed, but it is ſooner ſpoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of time, and ſkill, and pains, to get ſo great a conqueſt over ourſelves as this is, to cut off our right hand, to pluck out our right eye, and caſt it from us; even renounce and forſake thoſe very beloved and darling ſins, which the temper and conſtitution of our bodies, the corruption of our hearts, and conſtant cuſtom and practice hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very natures muſt be changed before we can ever leave them. And therefore it muſt needs be a matter of as great difficulty as it is of moment, to maſter and ſubdue thoſe ſins and luſts that have been long predominant in us; which I dare ſay many of us have found by our own ſad and woeful experience, having ſtruggled perhaps many years againſt ſome corruption, and yet to this day have not got it under, nor totally ſubdued it. And it is ſuch, and ſuch alone, who are competent judges in this caſe; for they that never ſtrove againſt their ſins, cannot know how ſtrong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to thoſe who have made it their buſineſs to deſtroy and mortify their luſts, that I appeal whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore muſt needs acknowledge it to be ſo; and by conſequence that it is no eaſy matter to get to heaven, ſeeing it is ſo hard to keep out of hell, and to avoid thoſe ſins which otherwiſe will certainly bring us thither; every ſin unrepented having eternal puniſhment entailed upon it.

And if it be ſo hard to forſake ſin, how difficult muſt it needs be to perform all thoſe duties, and to exert all thoſe graces which are neceſſarily required, in order to our attaining everlaſting happineſs. It is true, praying and hearing, which are the ordinary means for the obtaining true grace and holineſs, are duties very common and cuſtomary amongſt us, but they are never the eaſier becauſe they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accuſtomed to a careleſs and perfunctory performing theſe duties, cannot but find it an hard and difficult matter to keep our hearts ſo cloſe unto them, as to form them as we ought to do, and ſo as that we

may be really ſaid to do them. For we muſt not think that ſitting at church while the word of God is preached, is hearing the word of God, or being preſent there while prayers are read, is real praying: No, no, there is a deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright; inſomuch that, for my own part, I really think that prayer, as it is the higheſt, ſo is it the hardeſt duty that we can be engaged in. All the faculties of our ſouls, as well as members of our bodies, being obliged to put forth themſelves in their ſeveral capacities, to the due performance of it.

And as for theſe ſeveral graces and virtues which our ſouls muſt be adorned withal, before ever they can come to heaven, tho' it be eaſy to talk of them, it is not ſo to act them. I ſhall inſtance only in ſome few; as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's ſake; to hope on nothing but God's promiſes, and to fear nothing but his diſpleaſure; to love other mens perſons ſo as to hate their vices, and ſo to hate their vices as ſtill to love their perſons; not to covet riches when we have them not, nor truſt on them when we have them; to deny ourſelves that we may pleaſe God, and to take up our croſs that we may follow Chriſt; to live above the world whilſt we are in it, and to deſpiſe it whilſt we uſe it; to be always upon our watch and guard, ſtrictly obſerving not only the outward actions of our life, but the inward motions of our hearts; to hate thoſe very ſins which we uſed to love, and to love thoſe very duties which we uſed to hate; to chuſe the greateſt affliction before the leaſt ſin, and to neglect the getting of the greateſt gain, rather than the performing of the ſmalleſt duty; to believe truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the teſtimony of one whom we never ſaw; to ſubmit our wills to God's, and to delight ourſelves in obeying him; to be patient under ſufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do and ſuffer any thing we can for him who hath done and ſuffered ſo much for us; to cloath the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and reſcue the oppreſſed to the utmoſt of our power: In a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Chriſt, as loyal to our prince, as faithful to our friends, as loving to our enemies, as charitable to the poor, as juſt in our dealings, as eminent in all true graces and virtues, as if we were to be ſaved by it, and yet by no confidence in it, but ſtill look upon ourſelves as unprofitable ſervants, and depend upon Chriſt, and Chriſt alone, for pardon and ſalvation.

I ſuppoſe I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform ſuch duties, and to act ſuch graces as theſe are; but this let me tell the reader, that how hard, how difficult ſoever it is, it muſt be done, if ever we deſign to come to heaven, and by conſequence it is no eaſy matter to come thither. Seeing therefore the way that leads to heaven is thus narrow, and hard, it is no wonder that there are few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour himſelf aſſures us; for people generally love to ſwim with the ſtream, to run with the multitude, though it be into the gulf of ſin and miſery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow way, and keeping himſelf within thoſe bounds and limits wherewith it is incloſed; and this ſeems to have been the occaſion of theſe words in the goſpel of St. Luke, where one ſaid unto Chriſt, *Lord, are there few that be ſaved?* And our Saviour anſwered in theſe words, *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: For many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, Luke xiii. 23, 24. Intimating, not only that there are few that ſhall be ſaved, but likewiſe that many of thoſe who ſeek to be ſaved ſhall not attain it; not as if any of thoſe who really and cordially made it their buſineſs to look after heaven, can ever miſs of it; but, that many of thoſe who preſuming upon their ſeeming obedience and good works ſhall think and ſeek that way to enter into the kingdom of God, *ſhall not be able. For many will ſay unto me at that day* (ſaith He) *Lord, Lord, have we not prophеſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful works? and then I will profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*, Matt. vii. 22, 23. And if many of thoſe who are great profeſſors of religion, and make a plauſible ſhew of piety in the world, ſhall notwithſtanding come ſhort of eternal happineſs, and if out of thoſe *many which are called there are but few choſen*, Matt. xx. 16. we may well conclude there are but few indeed that walk in the narrow path that leads to life, in compariſon of thoſe innumerable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to ruin and deſtruction. One great reaſon whereof is, becauſe men generally, tho' they deſire to go to heaven, yet will not believe it to be ſo hard a thing as it really is, to get thither; and therefore ſetting aſide the ſuperficial performance of ſome few external duties, they give themſelves no trouble, nor take any pains about it; as if heaven was ſo contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look

after it; or howſoever, as if it was ſo eaſy a thing to attain it, that they cannot miſs it whether they look after it or no. Whereas queſtionleſs, as heaven is the greateſt happineſs that we are capable of, ſo it is the hardeſt matter in the world for any of us to attain it.

I ſay not this to diſcourage any one, but rather to excite and encourage all to a greater care and diligence in the proſecution of eternal happineſs, than ordinarily men ſeem to have. It is my hearty deſire and prayer that every ſoul among us may live and be happy for ever; but that we can never be, unleſs we be ſerious, earneſt and conſtant in looking after it, more than after all things in the world beſides. And therefore it is that I have endeavoured to convince men that it is not ſo eaſy a thing as they make it, to go to heaven, the path being ſo exceeding narrow that leads unto it; which I hope by this time we are all perſuaded of, ſo as to be reſolved within ourſelves to play no longer with religion, but to ſet upon it in good earneſt, ſo as to make it not only our great, but our only buſineſs and deſign in this world to prepare for another, and to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, and by conſequence to walk in that narrow way of true piety and virtue that leads to heaven, without going aſide into the vices on either hand; or howſoever to uſe the utmoſt of our endeavour to obſerve the rules which Chriſt hath preſcribed us, in order to our living with him for ever. And oh that I knew what words to take unto myſelf, and what arguments to uſe, whereby to prevail with every ſoul of us to make it our buſineſs to get to heaven; and by conſequence to walk directly in the narrow way, and through the ſtrait gate that leads unto it. What influence or effect they may have upon the readers, I know not, howſoever I ſhall endeavour to preſent them with ſome ſuch conſiderations, as I hope, by the bleſſing of God, and the aſſiſtance of his grace, may be ſo forcible and prevalent upon them, if ſeriouſly weighed, that they ſhould not methinks be able to reſiſt them.

Let us conſider therefore in the firſt place, that though it be never ſo hard to get to heaven, yet it is poſſible; and tho' there be but few that come thither, yet there are ſome; and why may not you and I be in the number of thoſe few as well as others? There are many perfect and glorious ſaints in heaven at this moment, which once were ſinful creatures upon earth as we now are; but it ſeems the way thither was not ſo narrow but they could walk in it, nor the gate ſo ſtrait

but they could paſs through it; and why may not we as well as they? We have the ſame natures whereby we are capable of happineſs as they had; we have the ſame ſcriptures to direct us to it as they had; we have the ſame promiſes of aſſiſtance as they had; we have the ſame Saviour as they had, and why then may we not get to the ſame place where they are? Is the way more narrow, and the gate more ſtrait to us than it was to them? No, ſurely, it is every way the ſame. Why then ſhould we deſpair of ever attaining everlaſting glory, ſeeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it? It is true, if no mortal men had ever got to heaven, or God had ſaid none ever can get thither, then indeed it would be in vain to us to expect it, or to uſe any means to attain it; but ſeeing many of our brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the ſtraitneſs of the gate, the narrowneſs of the way, or the difficulty of getting thither, ſhould never diſcourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us more diligent in the proſecution of it: Eſpecially conſidering in the next place that we are not only as yet in a capacity of getting to heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himſelf, for he would have all men to be ſaved, and *to come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. Yea, he hath ſworn by himſelf, ſaying, *As I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live*; and therefore calls upon us all, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael!* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Hence it is that he ſent his prophets to invite us, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*, Iſaiah lv. 1. Yea, he came down in his own perſon to earth, on purpoſe to invite us to heaven, and to direct us the way thither: *Come to me*, ſaith he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Matth. xi. 29. *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16. Whence we may obſerve, that there is no exception made againſt any perſon whatſoever, nor by conſequence againſt any of us. It is the will, yea, and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil way and live, and that every ſoul amongſt us walk in that narrow way that leads to eternal bliſs; and therefore if any of us do periſh, *Our blood will be upon our own heads, our deſtruction is from ourſelves*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. For it is no-

thing but the perverſeneſs of our own hearts, that can keep any ſoul of us out of heaven, however difficult it is to come thither. For God hath ſhewn how deſirous he is to have our company there, in that he is ſtill pleaſed to grant us both the ſpace and means of repentance. If he had no mind to have us ſaved, he could have ſhut us up long ago in hell; but he is ſo far from that, that he doth not only as yet continue our abode on earth, and lengthen our tranquillity here, but he ſtill vouchſafes unto us whatſoever is neceſſary, yea, whatſoever can any ways conduce to our eternal happineſs; we have his ſcriptures, we have his ſabbaths, we have his ordinances, we have his ſacraments, we have his miniſters, we have the promiſe of his ſpirit, we have the overtures of Chriſt, and of all the merits of his death and paſſion made unto us; and what can be deſired more to make men happy: and yet as if all this had not been enough, he ſtill continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea, and beſeeching us moſt affectionately to turn, that our ſouls may live; for we his miniſters are ambaſſadors to mankind for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: *We pray you in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. v. 20. And he hath ſent me unto you that read this, in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to death, into the narrow way that leads to life and happineſs; *In his Name, therefore I exhort, yea, and beſeech you by the mercies of God, that you preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. xii. 1. *Strive to enter into at the ſtrait gate*, and never leave till you have got poſſeſſion of eternal glory.

Nor let us be diſcouraged at any difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will ſoon be over; howſoever hard and difficult any duty may ſeem at firſt, by uſe and cuſtom it will ſoon grow eaſy. The worſt is at our firſt ſetting out; when once we have been uſed a while to walk in this narrow way, we ſhall find it to be both eaſy and pleaſant: For, as the wiſe man tells us, the ways of wiſdom or true piety *are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17. Though it be rough at firſt, by treading it will ſoon grow plain; we ſhall ſoon find the words of Chriſt to be true, that his *yoke is eaſy, and his burden light*, Mat. xi. 39. All is but to be willing and obedient, and reſolved upon it, to preſs through all difficulties whatſoever to get to heaven, and then by the merits of Chriſt's paſſion, and the aſſiſtance of his grace, we need not fear but we ſhall come thither.

And verily, although the way to heaven ſhould prove not only narrow, but hedged in with briars and thorns, ſo that we ſhould meet with nothing but croſſes and troubles in our going to it, yet heaven will make amends for all. For we may well reckon with the Apoſtle, *that the ſufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us*, Rom. viii. 18. So that whatſoever pains we are at, whatſoever trouble we ſuffer in order to our attaining everlaſting happineſs, bears no proportion at all to the happineſs we attain by it; which is ſo great, ſo exceeding great, that our tongues can neither expreſs, nor our minds as yet conceive it; conſiſting not only in the freedom from all evil, but alſo in the enjoyment of what is really and truly good; even whatſoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and compleatly happy: So that no duty can be too great to undertake, no trouble too heavy to undergo for it. Wherefore, that I may uſe the words of the Apoſtle to my readers, *My beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

By this time I hope we are all reſolved within ourſelves to follow our Saviour's counſel and advice, even *to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*, and *walk in that narrow way that leads to life*. If we be not, we have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect ourſelves to be in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity; but if we be but reſolved in good earneſt, we cannot but be very ſolicitous to know what we muſt do in order to it, or how every one of us may *enter in at the ſtrait gate*, ſo as to be happy for ever? A queſtion of the higheſt importance imaginable: So that it is abſolutely neceſſary for every ſoul amongſt us to be thoroughly reſolved in it, for it concerns our life, our immortal and eternal life; and therefore I ſhall endeavour to reſolve it in as few and perſpicuous terms as poſſibly I can, that the meaneſt capacity may underſtand it. But I muſt take leave to ſay before-hand, that our knowing of it will ſignify nothing, unleſs we practiſe it, neither will you be ever the nearer heaven, becauſe you know the way to it, unleſs you alſo walk in it.

And therefore the firſt thing I ſhall propound, in order to our eternal ſalvation, is, that we would reſolve immediately in the preſence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, ſtudy and buſineſs in this world, to *ſeek the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof*, in the firſt

place, according to our Saviour's advice and command, *Mat.* vi. 33. that we would not halt any longer between two opinions, and think to ſeek heaven and earth together, things diametrically oppoſite to one another. If we really think earth to be better than heaven, what need we trouble ourſelves any farther, than to heap up the riches, and to enjoy the pleaſures of this world? But if we really think heaven to be better than earth, as all wiſe men muſt needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not ourſelves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, *No man can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or elſe he will hold with the one, and deſpiſe the other: ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon*, Mat. vii. 14. that is, in plain Engliſh, we cannot mind heaven and earth both together; for we can have but one grand and principal deſign in the world; and therefore if our principal deſign be to get wealth or any earthly enjoyment, we deceive ourſelves, if we think that we mind heaven at all. For that we can never properly be ſaid to do, until we mind it before all things whatſoever in the world beſides; and let us not ſay, or think within ourſelves, *that it is an hard ſaying*, for we may aſſure ourſelves it is no more than what we ſhall all find to be really true; and that never a ſoul of us ſhall ever know what heaven is, that doth not firſt prefer it before all things here below, and by conſequence make it his principal, if not only deſign to get thither.

Suppoſing us therefore to be thus reſolved within ourſelves, my next advice is, that we break off our former ſins by repentance, and ſhewing mercy to the poor, and that for the future we live not in the wilful commiſſion of any known ſin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known duty. Where it is evident, I adviſe to no more than what all men know themſelves to be obliged to do; for I dare ſay, there is none of us know ſo little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we ourſelves know to be ſin, and do what we know to be our duty, and though our kdowledge may not be ſo great as others, yet our piety may be greater, and our condition better. But we muſt ſtill remember, that one ſin will keep us out of heaven as well as twenty; and therefore, if we ever deſire to come thither, we muſt not only do ſome or many things, but all things, whatſoever is required of us, to the beſt of our knowledge. I ſpeak not this of myſelf, but Chriſt himſelf hath told us the ſame before, even that we muſt

keep the commandments, all the commandments, if we deſire to enter into eternal life, *Mat.* xix. 16, 17. Not as if it was indiſpenſably neceſſary to obſerve every punctilio and circumſtance of the moral law, for then no man could be ſaved; but that it muſt be both our ſtedfaſt reſolution, and our chief ſtudy and endeavour to avoid whatſoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatſoever we know to be commanded by God.

And tho' by this we ſhall make a fair progreſs in the narrow way to life, yet there is ſtill another ſtep behind, before we can enter in at the ſtrait gate, and that is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as our Saviour himſelf has taught us, *Mat.* xix. 21. The ſum of which duty in brief is this, that when we have done all we can in obedience to the moral law, yet we muſt ſtill look upon ourſelves as unprofitable ſervants, and not expect to be juſtified or ſaved by virtue of that obedience, but only the merits of Chriſt's death and paſſion; humbly confiding that, in and through him, the defects of our obedience ſhall be remitted, our perſons accepted, our natures cleanſed, and our ſouls eternally ſaved. This is not only the principal, but the only thing which Paul and Silas directed the keeper of the priſon to, in order to his ſalvation, as comprehending all the reſt under it, or at leaſt ſuppoſing them, *Acts* xvi. 31.

Thus therefore, though obedience be the way, faith is the gate through which we muſt enter into life. But ſeeing the gate is ſtrait as well as the way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Chriſt as to obſerve the law, we muſt not think to do either by our own ſtrength, but ſtill implore the aid and aſſiſtance of Almighty God, and depend upon him for it. For Chriſt himſelf ſaith, *No man can come unto me, except the Father which ſent me, draw him*, John vi. 44. But we can never expect that he ſhould draw us, unleſs we deſire it of him; and therefore it muſt be our daily prayer and petition at the throne of grace, that God would vouchſafe us his eſpecial grace and aſſiſtance, without which I cannot ſee how any one that knows his own heart, can expect to be ſaved. But our comfort is, if we do what we can, God will hear our prayers, and enable us to do what otherwiſe we cannot; for he never yet did, nor ever will fail any man that ſincerely endeavours to ſerve and honour him.

Laſtly, Although we are to truſt in God for the anſwer of our prayers in this particular, yet we muſt not expect that he ſhould do it immediately from himſelf, but we muſt uſe thoſe

means which himſelf hath appointed whereby to work faith, and by conſequence all other graces in us. Now the ſcripture tells us that faith comes by hearing, *Rom.* x. 17. Wherefore, if we deſire to believe, ſo as to be ſaved, we muſt wait upon God in his public ordinances, and there expect ſuch influences of his grace and ſpirit whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow way, and enter in at the ſtrait gate that leads to life.

Thus I have ſhewn you in a few terms, how to do the great work which you came into the world about, even how to get to heaven. For howſoever hard it is to come hither, let us but reſolve, as we have ſeen, to mind it before all things elſe, fear God and keep his commandments to the utmoſt of our power, believe in Chriſt for the pardon of our ſins, and acceptance both of our perſons and performances; pray ſincerely to God, and wait diligently upon him for the aſſiſtance of his grace, to do what he requires from us. Let us do this, and we need not fear but our ſouls ſhall live. If we leave this undone, we ourſelves ſhall be undone for ever. And therefore let me adviſe all to dally no longer in a matter of ſuch conſequence as this, but now we know the way to heaven, to turn immediately into it, and walk conſtantly in it. Though the way be narrow, it is not long, and though the gate be ſtrait, it opens into eternal life. And therefore to conclude, let us remember we have now been told how to get to heaven; it is not in my power to force men thither, whether they will or no; I can only ſhew them the way. It is their intereſt as well as duty to walk in it; which if they do, I dare aſſure them in the name of Chriſt, it is not long but they will be admitted into the choir of heaven, to ſing hallelujahs for evermore.

## *Thoughts upon the Imitation of* CHRIST.

IF we ſeriouſly conſider with ourſelves, that wonder of all wonders, that myſtery of all myſteries, the incarnation of the ſon of God, it may juſtly ſtrike us into aſtoniſhment, and an admiration what ſhould be the reaſon and the end of it; why the great and glorious, the Almighty and eternal God, ſhould take our weak and finite nature into his infinite and incomprehenſible perſon? Why the Creator of all things

ſhould himſelf become a creature? And he that made the world be himſelf made into it? Why the ſupreme Being of all beings, that gives eſſence and exiſtence to all things in the world, whoſe glory the heaven of heavens is not able to contain, ſhould cloath himſelf with fleſh and become man, of the ſelf-ſame nature and ſubſtance with us, who live, and move, and have our being in him? certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account that the moſt high God manifeſted himſelf to the ſons of men in ſo wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But he did it queſtionleſs upon ſome deſign that was as great and glorious as the act itſelf. And if we would know what his end and deſign in coming into the world was, the ſcriptures aſſure us in general, that it was for the ſalvation of mankind whoſe nature he aſſumed. *For this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.* 1 Tim. i. 25. And he himſelf tells us, *That God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting life,* John iii. 16. Now for the accompliſhment of this no leſs glorious than gracious deſign, there are two things which it was neceſſary he ſhould do for us, whilſt he was upon earth, even expiate our former ſins, and direct us unto holineſs for the future; both which he hath effected for us: The one by his death, and the other by his life.

For by his death he hath paid that debt which we owed to God, having made compleat ſatisfaction to God's juſtice for thoſe ſins whereby we have incurred his diſpleaſure: For death was threatened to all mankind in caſe of diſobedience, and by conſequence all mankind being diſobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it ſtand with the juſtice of God, to falſify his word, nor yet with his glory, to put up the injuries that we have committed againſt him, without having ſatisfaction made unto him for them. But it being impoſſible that a finite creature ſhould ſatisfy for thoſe ſins which were committed againſt the infinite God: Hence the infinite God himſelf was pleaſed to undertake it for us, even to ſatisfy himſelf for thoſe ſins which were committed againſt him; which he did, by undergoing that death which he had threatened to us in our own nature, united to the perſon of his own and only ſon, God co-equal, co-eſſential, co-eternal with himſelf, who is therefore ſaid *to be a propitiation for our ſins,* 1 John ii. 2. Neither can there any reaſon imaginable be alledged, why the ſon of God himſelf ſhould ſuffer death, un-

leſs it was upon our account, and in our ſtead, whoſe nature he aſſumed, and in which he ſuffered it. But not to inſiſt upon that now: The human nature in general having thus ſuffered that death in the perſon of the ſon of God, which all mankind was otherwiſe bound to have undergone in their own perſons; hence it comes to paſs, that we are all in a capacity of avoiding that death which we have deſerved by our ſins, if we do but rightly believe in Chriſt, and apply his ſuffering to ourſelves.

And as Chriſt by his death and paſſion hath thus ſatisfied for our ſins, ſo hath he by his life and actions given us an exact pattern of true piety and virtue. And although I cannot ſay, it was the only, yet queſtionleſs one great end wherefore he continued ſo long on earth, and converſed ſo much amongſt men, and that ſo many of his actions are delivered to us with ſo many circumſtances as they are, was, that we, by his example, might learn how to carry and behave ourſelves in this lower world. For as from that time to this, ſo from the beginning of the world to that time, there had been never a man upon the face of the earth, that had lived ſo conformably to the law of God, that it was ſafe or lawful for another to follow him in all things. For all fleſh was corrupt, and the very beſt of men were ſtill but men, ſubject to failures in their lives, as well as to errors in their judgments; yea thoſe very perſons whom the ſcriptures record, and God himſelf atteſteth to have been eminent in their generation for piety and juſtice, did oftentimes fail in both. Noah is aſſerted by God himſelf to have been righteous in his generation, Abraham to be the father of the faithful, Moſes to be the meekeſt man upon earth, David to be a man after God's own heart, Solomon to have been the wiſeſt man that ever lived, and *Job* to be a *perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eſchewed evil:* Yet none of theſe moſt excellent perſons but had their vices as well as virtues: And it is obſervable, that the more eminent any were in piety, the more notorious ſins God hath ſometimes ſuffered them to ſlip into, to keep them humble. So that from the firſt to the ſecond Adam, there never lived a man of whom it could be ſaid, this man never ſinned, never tranſgreſſed the laws of God, and therefore may in all things be imitated by men.

But now as the firſt was made, the ſecond Adam continued all along moſt pure and perfect, both in thought, word, and action: For he did *no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Never ſo much as a vain thought even

ſprang up in his moſt holy heart, not ſo much as an idle word ever proceeded out of his divine lips, nor ſo much as an impertinent or frivolous action was ever performed by his ſacred and moſt righteous hands; his whole life being nothing elſe but one continued act of piety towards God, juſtice towards men, love and charity towards all. And as himſelf lived, ſo would he have all his diſciples live whilſt they are here below; and therefore enjoins them that go after him, not only to deny themſelves, and take up their croſſes, but alſo to follow, or imitate him to the utmoſt of their power in their life and actions. So that he now expects that all thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be his diſciples, do firſt deny themſelves whatſoever is offenſive unto him; and then take up their croſs ſo as to be ready and willing to do or ſuffer any thing for him that hath done and ſuffered ſo much as he hath for us. And then laſtly, that they write after the copy that he hath ſet them, and walk in the ſteps wherein he hath gone before them; even that they follow him through all duties and difficulties whatſoever, ſo as ſtill to do unto the utmoſt of their power as he did, otherwiſe they in vain pretend to be his diſciples. *For he that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked*, 1 John ii. 6. that is, he that profeſſeth to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould live as he lived while he was upon earth. Hence St. Paul, a true diſciple of Chriſt, ſaith, *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. As he followed Chriſt, he would have others to follow him; but he would have them follow him no farther than as he followed Chriſt.

It is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Chriſt's being ſo or no, the Law of God firſt obliged us to be ſo; but howſoever, we have now an additional obligation upon us to be holy, *As he who hath called us was holy in all manner of converſation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. For the ſcripture tells us expreſly, that Chriſt *hath left us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour himſelf commands all that come to him, to learn of him, *Matt.* xi. 29, 30. And therefore we can never expect that he ſhould own us for his diſciples, unleſs we own him for our Lord and Maſter, ſo far as to obey and follow him; he having commanded all thoſe that come to him, to deny themſelves, take up their croſſes and follow him. And ſeeing we all, I hope, deſire to be Chriſtians indeed, as I have explained the two former of theſe duties, I ſhall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter

too, that we may all ſo follow Chriſt here, as to come to him hereafter.

Now for the opening of this, we muſt know that we neither can or ought to follow Chriſt in every thing he did when he was here below; for even whilſt he was here below, he was ſtill the moſt high and mighty God, the ſame that he had been from eternity, and often manifeſted his power and glory to the ſons of men, whilſt he was converſing with them in their own nature, wherein it would be horrid preſumption for us to pretend to follow him. As for example, *He knew the very thoughts of men*, Matt. xii. 25. which I ſuppoſe is ſomething paſt our ſkill to do. Hence alſo he judged and cenſured others, *Woe unto you*, ſaith he, *Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye are like to painted ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanneſs*, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. But this we could not do though we might, not being able to ſearch into others hearts; neither may we do it, though we could, Chriſt himſelf having expreſly commanded the contrary, ſaying, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, Matt. vii. 1. Our Saviour alſo, as God, foretold future events, *Luke* xxi. 6. and wrought miracles, ſuch as were clear demonſtrations of his infinite power and Godhead; but in this he is to be believed and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus alſo when he ſent his diſciples to looſe another man's colt, and bring him away, *Luke* xix. 30. that he did as Lord and Sovereign of the world, or as the ſupreme Poſſeſſor and univerſal Proprietor of all things; as when he commanded the Iſraelites to ſpoil the Egyptians, and carry away their jewels and raiment; for, all things being his, he may give them to whom he pleaſeth; and though it would have been a ſin to have taken them away without his command, yet his command gave them a property in them, a right and title to them, and they had ſinned unleſs they had obeyed the command. So here our Saviour ſent for the colt, as if it had been his own, for ſo really it was, as he is God, which he manifeſted himſelf to be at the ſame time, in that he inclined the heart of the civil owner thereof to let him go, only upon the diſciples ſaying, *that the Lord had need of him*, Luke xix. 33, 34. But this he did not for our example, but to ſhew forth his own power and glory.

There are ſome things alſo which our bleſſed Saviour did, as God-Man, or as the Mediator betwixt God and man, as his making atonement and ſatisfaction for the ſins of man-

kind, his inſtituting offices and ordinances, and ſacraments in his church, and the like; which have an immediate reſpect to his office of Mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate him in ſuch things. But the things which he would have us to follow him in, are ſuch and ſuch only as he did as mere man, that had no immediate dependance upon or reference to either his Godhead or Mediatorſhip. For he having honoured our nature ſo far, as to take it into his own divine perſon, ſo as to become really and truly man; as ſo, he did whatſoever man is bound to do, both as to God himſelf, and likewiſe unto man; and being abſolutely perfect in all the faculties of the ſoul, and members of his body, he infinitely ſurpaſſed all other men both in divine graces and moral virtues; ſo that as he never committed any one ſin, ſo neither did he neglect any one duty, which as man he was bound to perform either to God, or men, but ſtill obſerved every punctilio and circumſtance of the moral law; by which means he left us a compleat pattern of truth and univerſal holineſs, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

Hoping therefore, that all who profeſs themſelves to be the friends and diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, deſire to manifeſt themſelves to be ſo, by following both his precepts and example, I ſhall give the reader a ſhort narrative of his life and actions, wherein we may all ſee what true piety is, and what real Chriſtianity requires of us: and may not content ourſelves as many do, with being profeſſors, and adhering to parties or factions amongſt us, but ſtrive to be thorough Chriſtians, and to carry ourſelves as ſuch, by walking as Chriſt himſelf walked; which that we may at leaſt know how to do, looking upon Chriſt as a meer man, I ſhall ſhew how he did, and by conſequence how we ought to carry ourſelves both to God and man, and what graces and virtues he exerciſed all along for our example and imitation.

Now for our more clear and methodical proceeding, in a matter of ſuch conſequence as this is, I ſhall begin with his behaviour towards men, from his childhood to his death.

*Firſt* therefore, when he was a child of twelve years of age, it is particularly recorded of him, that he was ſubject or obedient to his parents, his real mother and reputed father, *Luke* ii. 51. It is true, he knew at that time that God himſelf was his Father, for, ſaid he, *wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?* ii. 49. And knowing God to be his Father, he could not but know likewiſe that he was infi-

nitely above his mother; yea, that ſhe could never have borne him, had not himſelf firſt made and ſupported her. Yet howſoever, though as God he was Father to her, yet as man ſhe was mother to him, and therefore he honoured and obeyed both her and him to whom ſhe was eſpouſed. Neither did he only reſpect his mother whilſt he was here, but he took care of her too when he was going hence. Yea, all the pains he ſuffered upon the croſs could not make him forget his duty to her that bore him; but ſeeing her ſtanding by the croſs, as himſelf hung on it, he committed her to the care of his beloved diſciple, who *took her to his own home*, John xix. 27. Now, as our Saviour did, ſo are we bound to carry ourſelves to our earthly parents, whatſoever their temper or condition be in this world. Though God hath bleſſed ſome of us perhaps with greater eſtates than ever he bleſſed them, yet we muſt not think ourſelves above them, nor be at all the leſs reſpectful to them. Chriſt, we ſee, was infinitely above his mother, yet as ſhe was his mother, he was both ſubject and reſpectful to her. He was not aſhamed to own her as ſhe ſtood by the croſs, but, in the view and hearing of all there preſent, gave his diſciple a charge to take care of her; leaving us an example, that ſuch amongſt us as have parents, provide for them if they need it, as for our children, both while we live, and when we come to die.

And as he was to his natural, ſo was he too to his civil parents the magiſtrates under which he lived, ſubmiſſive and faithful: for though as he was God, he was infinitely above them in heaven, yet as he was man, he was below them on earth, having committed all civil power into their hands, without reſerving any at all for himſelf. So that tho' they received their commiſſion from him, yet now himſelf could not act without receiving a commiſſion from them. And the efore having no commiſſion from them to do it, he would not intrench ſo much upon their privilege and power, as to determine the controverſy betwixt the two brethren contending about their inheritance; "Man, ſaith he, who made me "a judge or a divider over you?" Luke xii. 14. And to ſhew his ſubmiſſion to the civil magiſtrates, as highly as poſſible he could, rather than offend them, he wrought a miracle to pay the tax which they had charged upon him, Mat. xvii. 27. And when the officers were ſent to take him, tho' he had more than twelve legions of angels at his ſervice to have fought for him if he had pleaſed, yet he would not employ them, nor ſuffer his own diſciples to make any reſiſtance,

Mat. xxvi. 52, 53. And though ſome of late days, who call themſelves Chriſtians, have acted quite contrary to our bleſſed Saviour in this particular, I hope better things of my readers, even that they will behave themſelves more like Chriſt, who, though he was ſupreme Governor of the world, yet would not reſiſt, but ſubmitted to the civil power, which himſelf had entruſted men withal.

Moreover, although whilſt he was here, he was really not only the beſt but greateſt man upon earth, yet he carried himſelf to others with that meekneſs, humility, and reſpect, as if he had been the leaſt; as he never admired any man for his riches, ſo neither did he deſpiſe any man for his poverty; poor men and rich were all alike to him. He was as lowly and reſpectful to the loweſt, as he was to the higheſt that he converſed with: He affected no titles of honour, nor gaped after popular air, but ſubmitted himſelf to the meaneſt ſervices that he could, for the good of others, even to the waſhing his own diſciples feet, and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of ourſelves, nor do any thing that is beneath us; propounding himſelf as our example, eſpecially in this particular, "Learn of me, ſaith he, for I am meek "and lowly in heart," Matth. xi. 29.

His humility alſo was the more remarkable, in that his bounty and goodneſs to others was ſo great, for he went about doing good, Acts x. 38. Whereſoever you read he was, you read ſtill of ſome good work or other he did there. Whatſoever company he converſed with, they ſtill went better from him than they came unto him, if they came out of a good end. By him, as himſelf ſaid, "the blind received "their ſight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleanſed, "and the deaf heard, the dead were raiſed up, and the poor "have the goſpel preached unto them," Mat. xi. 5. Yea, it is obſervable, that we never read of any perſon whatſoever that came to him, deſiring any kindneſs or favour of him, but he ſtill received it, and that whether he was friend or foe. For indeed, though he had many inveterate and implacable enemies in the world, yet he bore no grudge or malice againſt them, but expreſſed as much love and favour for them as to his greateſt friends. Inſomuch that when they had gotten him upon the croſs, and faſtened his hands and feet unto it, in the midſt of all that pain and torment which they put him to, he ſtill prayed for them, Luke xxiii. 34.

Oh! how happy, how bleſſed a people ſhould we be, could we but follow our bleſſed Saviour in this particular! How

well would it be with us, could we but be thus loving to one another, as Chriſt was to all, even his moſt bitter enemies? We may aſſure ourſelves it is not only our miſery but our ſin too, unleſs we be ſo. And our ſin will be the greater, now we know our maſter's pleaſure, unleſs we do it. And therefore, let all ſuch amongſt us, as deſire to carry ourſelves as Chriſt himſelf did, and as becometh his diſciples in the world, begin here.

Be ſubmiſſive and obedient both to our parents and governors, humble in our own ſight, deſpiſe none, but be charitable, loving, and good to all: By this ſhall all men know that we are Chriſt's diſciples indeed.

Having thus ſeen our Saviour's carriage towards men, we ſhall now conſider his piety and devotion towards God: not as if it was poſſible for me to expreſs the excellency and perfection of thoſe religious acts which he performed continually within his ſoul to God, every one of its faculties being as intire in itſelf, and as perfect in its acts, as it was firſt made or deſigned to be. There was no darkneſs, nor ſo much as gloomineſs in his mind, no error or miſtake in his judgment, no bribery nor corruption in his conſcience, no obſtinacy or perverſeneſs in his will, no irregularity nor diſorder in his affections, no ſpot, no blot, no blemiſh, not the leaſt imperfection or infirmity in his whole ſoul. And therefore even whilſt his body was on earth, his head and heart were ſtill in heaven. For he never troubled his head, nor ſo much as concerned himſelf about any thing here below, any further than to do all the good he could, his thoughts being wholly taken up with conſidering how to advance God's glory and man's eternal happineſs. And as for his heart, that was the altar on which the ſacred fire of divine love was always burning, the flames whereof continually aſcended up to heaven, being accompanied with the moſt ardent and fervent deſires of, and delight in, the chiefeſt good.

But it muſt not be expected that I ſhould give an exact deſcription of that eminent and moſt perfect holineſs which our bleſſed Saviour was inwardly adorned with, and continually employed in; which I am as unable to expreſs as deſirous to imitate. But howſoever, I ſhall endeavour to mind the reader in general of ſuch acts of piety and devotion, which are particularly recorded, on purpoſe for our imitation.

*Firſt* therefore, it is obſerved of our Saviour, that *from a child he increaſed in wiſdom, as he did in ſtature*, Luke ii. 52. Where by wiſdom we are to underſtand the knowledge

of God, and divine things. For our Saviour having taken our nature into his perſon, with all its frailties and infirmities, as it is a created being, he did not in that nature preſently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, he then knew all things as well as he had from all eternity: But we are now ſpeaking of him as man, like one of us in all things except ſin. But we continue ſome conſiderable time after we are born before we know any thing, or come to the uſe of our reaſon; the rational ſoul not being able to exert or manifeſt itſelf until the natural phlegm and radical moiſture of the body, which in infants is predominant, be ſo digeſted that the body be rightly qualified, and its organs fitted for the ſoul to work upon, and to make uſe of. And though our Saviour came to the uſe of his reaſon, as man, far ſooner than we are wont to do, yet we muſt not think that he knew all things as ſoon as he was born; for that the nature he aſſumed was not capable of; neither could he then be ſaid, as he is, to increaſe in wiſdom, for where there is a perfection there can be no increaſe.

But here before we proceed farther, it will be neceſſary to anſwer an objection which ſome may make againſt this. For, if our Saviour as man knew not all things, then he was not perfect, nor abſolutely free from ſin, ignorance itſelf being a ſin.

To this I have theſe things to anſwer; firſt, it is no ſin for a creature to be ignorant of ſome things, becauſe it is impoſſible for a creature to know all things; for to be omniſcient is God's prerogative, neither is a creature capable of it, becauſe he is but finite, whereas the knowledge of all things, or omniſcience, is itſelf an infinite act, and therefore to be performed only by an infinite being. Hence it is that no creature in the world ever was, or ever could be made omniſcient; but there are many things which Adam in his integrity, and the very angels themſelves are ignorant of; as our Saviour, ſpeaking of the day of judgment, ſaith, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*, Mark xiii. 32. But the Angels are nevertheleſs perfect, becauſe they know not this. Nay, it is obſervable, that the Son himſelf, as man, knew it not; neither, ſaith he, *the Son, but the Father*; and if he knew it not then, much leſs was it neceſſary for him to know it when a child.

Secondly, as to be ignorant of ſome things is no ſin, ſo neither is any ignorance at all ſin, but that whereby a man is

ignorant of what he is bound to know: *For all ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.* And therefore if there be no law obliging me to know ſuch or ſuch things, I do not ſin by being ignorant of them, for I tranſgreſs no law. Now, though all men are bound by the law of God to know him, and their duty to him, yet infants, ſo long as infants, are not, neither can be obnoxious or ſubject to that law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea, impoſſibility to perform it; but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged queſtionleſs to know him firſt, from whom they receive their knowledge.

And thus it was that our bleſſed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the law of God; in that although he might ſtill continue ignorant of many things, yet howſoever he all along knew all that he was bound to know, and as he grew by degrees more and more capable of knowing any thing, ſo did he increaſe ſtill more in true wiſdom, or in the knowledge of God: ſo that by that time he was twelve years old, he was able to diſpute with the great doctors and learned Rabbies among the Jews; and after that, as he grew in ſtature, ſo did he grow in wiſdom too, and in favour both with God and man.

And verily, although we did not follow our bleſſed Saviour in this particular when we were children, we ought howſoever to endeavour it now we are men and women, even to grow in wiſdom, and every day add ſomething to our ſpiritual ſtature, ſo as to let never a day paſs over our heads, without being better acquainted with God's goodneſs to us, or our duty to him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in wiſdom when a child, we ſhould alſo learn to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and not ſtrive ſo much to make them rich, as to uſe all means to make them wiſe and good, that they may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wiſdom and in ſtature, and in the favour both of God and man.

And as our Saviour grew in wiſdom when a child, ſo did he uſe and manifeſt it when he came to be a man, by devoting himſelf wholly unto the ſervice of the living God, and to the exerciſe of all true grace and virtue; wherein his bleſſed ſoul was ſo much taken up, that he had neither time nor heart to mind thoſe toys and trifles which ſilly mortals upon earth are ſo much apt to dote on. It is true, all the world was his, but he had given it all away to others, not reſerving for himſelf ſo much as an houſe to put his head in, *Matt.* viii. 20. And what money he had hoarded up, you may gather

from his working a miracle to pay his tribute or poll money, which came not to much above a ſhilling. Indeed, he came into the world, and went out again, without ever taking any notice of any pleaſures, honours, or riches in it, as if there had been no ſuch thing here, as really there was not, or ever will be; all the pomp and glory of this deceitful world having no other being or exiſtence, but only in our diſtempered fancies and imaginations, and therefore our Saviour, whoſe fancy was ſound, and his imagination untainted, looked upon all the world and the glory of it as not worthy to be looked upon, ſeeing nothing in it wherefore it ſhould be deſired. And therefore inſtead of ſpending his time in the childiſh purſuit of clouds and ſhadows, he made the ſervice of God not only his buſineſs, but his recreation too, his food, as well as work. *It is my meat*, ſaith he, *to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*, John iv. 34. This was all the riches, honours and pleaſures, which he ſought for in the world, even to do the will of him that ſent him thither, to finiſh the work which he came about; and ſo he did before he went away; *Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou ſenteſt me to do*, John xvii. 4. If therefore we would be Chriſt's diſciples, ſo as to follow him, we ſee what we muſt do, and how we muſt behave and carry ourſelves whilſt we are here below; we muſt not ſpend our time, nor throw away our precious and ſhort-lived days upon the trifles and impertinences of this tranſient world, as if we came hither for nothing elſe but to take and ſcrape up a little duſt and dirt together, or to wallow ourſelves like ſwine in the mire of carnal pleaſures and delights. No, we may aſſure ourſelves we have greater things to do, and far more noble deſigns to carry on whilſt we continue in this vale of tears, even *to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, and to make our calling and election ſure*, and to ſerve God here, ſo as to enjoy him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we muſt not only do, but do it too with pleaſure and delight, and never leave until we have accompliſhed it; we muſt make it our only pleaſure to pleaſe God, account it our only honour to honour him, and eſteem his love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy; we muſt think ourſelves no farther happy, than we find ourſelves to be truly holy, and therefore devote our lives wholly to him, in whom we live. This is to live as Chriſt lived, and by conſequence as Chriſtians ought to do.

I might here inſtance in ſeveral other acts of piety and devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exerciſed himſelf in, as his humble and perfect ſubmiſſion and reſignation of his own will to God's, his moſt ardent love unto him, and zeal for him, as alſo his firm and ſtedfaſt truſt and confidence in him; ſo that nothing could ever diſquiet or diſcompoſe his mind, but ſtill his heart was fixed truſting in the Lord. In all which, it is both our duty and intereſt to follow him; our happineſs as well as holineſs conſiſting in our dependance upon God, and inclinations to him.

But we ſhould do well to obſerve withal, that our Saviour performed external as well as inward worſhip and devotion unto God; particularly we often find him praiſing God and praying unto him; and that with his eyes lift up to heaven in a moſt humble and reverential poſture, *John* xvii. 1. *Luke* xxii. 4. *Matt.* xxvi. 39. yea, when he was to chuſe and ordain ſome of his diſciples to the work of the miniſtry, and to ſucceed him after his departure, under the name of Apoſtles, he ſpent the night before in prayer to God, *Luke* vi. 12. I confeſs the words there uſed, *en te proſeuche tou Theou*, will ſcarce admit of that interpretation or expoſition, ſignifying rather in a ſtrict ſenſe, that he went into a place appointed for prayer, which was uſually called *proſeuche*, a place of prayer, which kind of places were very frequent in Judea, and ſome of them continued till *Epiphanius*'s time, as himſelf aſſerts; and they were only plots of ground incloſed with a wall, and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always, upon mountains, whither the Jews uſed to reſort to pray together in great multitudes. And this ſeems to be the proper meaning of theſe words, where our Saviour is ſaid to go into a mountain, and to continue all night, *en te proſeuche tou Theou, in one of theſe Proſeucha's of God, a place dedicated to his ſervice.* Yet howſoever we cannot ſuppoſe but that he went thither to do what the place whither he went was deſigned for, even to pray: And by conſequence, that ſeeing he ſtayed there, all night, queſtionleſs he ſpent the whole night in prayer and meditation, in order to ſo great a work as the ordaining his apoſtles was.

Here therefore is another copy which our maſter Chriſt hath ſet us to write after; a leſſon that all muſt learn and practiſe that would be his diſciples. Though we ordinarily converſe with nothing but dirt and clay, and with our fellow worms on earth, yet as Chriſt did, ſo ſhould we often retire

from the tumults and buſtles of the world to converſe with him that made us; both to praiſe him for the mercies we have received, and to pray unto him for what we want; only we ſhall do well to have a care that we do not perform ſo ſolemn a duty as this is, after a careleſs and perfunctory manner, becauſe none ſees but God; for his ſeeing us is infinitely more than if all the world beſide ſhould ſee us; and we muſt ſtill remember that prayer is the greateſt work that a creature can be engaged in, and therefore to be performed with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs, reverence, and earneſtneſs that poſſibly we can raiſe up our ſpirits to. And beſides our daily devotions which we owe and ought to pay to God, whenſoever we ſet upon any great and weighty buſineſs, we muſt be ſure to follow our Saviour's ſteps in ſetting ſome time apart proportionably to the buſineſs we undertake, wherein to aſk God's counſel, and deſire his direction and bleſſing in the moſt ſerious and ſolemn manner that poſſibly we can. I need not tell the reader what benefit we ſhall receive by this means, none of us that ſhall try it, but will ſoon find it by experience.

I ſhall obſerve only one thing more concerning our Saviour's devotion, and that is, that although he took all occaſions to inſtruct and admoniſh his diſciples and followers, whether in the fields or upon the mountains, in private houſes, even whereſoever he could find an opportunity to do it; yet upon ſabbath days he always frequented the public worſhip of God; he went into the ſynagogues, places appointed for public prayers, and reading and hearing the word, a thing which I fear many amongſt us do not think of, or at leaſt not rightly conſider it; for if they did, they would not dare methinks to walk ſo directly contrary to our bleſſed Saviour in this particular; for St. Luke tells us, that *when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath day*, Luke iv. 16. From whence none of us but may eaſily obſerve, that our Saviour did not go into a ſynagogue or church by the bye, to ſee what they were doing there, neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the ſabbath-day, but it was his cuſtom and conſtant practice to do ſo, even to go each ſabbath-day to the public ordinances, there to join with the congregation in performing their ſervice and devotions to Almighty God.

And here I muſt take leave to ſay, that was there no other law, nor any other obligations upon us (as there be many) to frequent the public worſhip of God, this practice and

example of our bleſſed Saviour doth ſufficiently and effectually oblige us all to a conſtant attendance upon the public ordinances. For as we are Chriſtians, and profeſs ourſelves to be his diſciples, we are all bound to follow him, he commands us here and elſewhere to do it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow him in, more than in the manner of his worſhipping God. And therefore whoſoever out of any humour, fancy, or ſlothfulneſs ſhall preſume to neglect the public worſhip of God, he doth not only act contrary to Chriſt's example, but tranſgreſſes alſo his command, that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this will have to anſwer for themſelves when they come to ſtand before Chriſt's tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians, ſhould follow Chriſt in all things that they can, and by conſequence in this particular; and that they ſin who do not.

But in whatſoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's ſteps, that we are uſually preſent at the public worſhip of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow him in, but that as we follow him to the publick ordinances, ſo we do likewiſe in our private devotions, yea, and in our behaviour both to God and man; which that we may the better do, I have endeavoured to ſhew wherein we ought eſpecially to follow Chriſt, in being obedient to our parents, ſubject to our governors, lowly to the loweſt, loving and charitable unto all; as alſo in growing in wiſdom and the knowledge of God, in contemning the world, in devoting ourſelves wholly to the ſervice of God, in reſigning our wills to his, in loving of him, in truſting on him above all things elſe, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting his public ordinances; to which I may alſo add, in denying ourſelves, and taking up our croſſes, which he himſelf hath done before us, as well as required of us.

What now remains, but that ſeeing the ſteps wherein our Saviour walked, we ſhould all reſolve to walk together in them. And I hope that I need not uſe arguments to perſuade any to it; it is enough, one would think, that Chriſt himſelf, whoſe name we bear, expects and commands it from us. And in that the ſum of all religion conſiſteth in obeying and following Chriſt, the circumſtances of whoſe life are recorded on purpoſe that we may imitate him unto the utmoſt of our power, not only in the matter but manner of

our actions, even in the circumſtances as well as in the ſubſtance of them.

But this I dare ſay we all both know and believe, even that it is our duty to follow Chriſt; and therefore it is a ſad, a diſmal thing to conſider, that among them that know it there are ſo few that do it; but even thoſe that go under the name of Chriſtians themſelves, do more generally follow the beaſts of the field, or the very fiends of hell, rather than Chriſt our Saviour. For all covetous worldings that look no higher than earth, and all luxurious epicures that labour after no other but ſenſual pleaſures, whom do they imitate but the beaſts that periſh? And as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malicious ſeducers of their brethren, and oppreſſors of their neighbours, all back biters and falſe accuſers, all deriders of religion, and apoſtates from it, they are of their father the devil, and his works they will do. And if all ſuch perſons ſhould be taken from amongſt us, how few would be left behind that follow Chriſt? Very few indeed! but I hope there would be ſome. And oh, that all who read this would be in the number of them, even that they would all from this day forward reſolve to come as near our bleſſed Saviour in all their actions both to God and man, as poſſibly they can; which if we once did, what holy, what happy lives ſhould we then lead? How ſhould we antedate both the work and joys of heaven! And how certain ſhould we be to be there ere long, where Chriſt that is the pattern of our lives here will be the portion of our ſouls for ever?

Thus I have ſhewn what Chriſt requires of thoſe who would be his diſciples, enjoining them to deny themſelves, take up their croſs and follow him. And now I have done my duty in explaining theſe words, it is all my readers as well as mine to practiſe them, which I heartily wiſh we would all reſolve to do; and I muſt ſay it highly concerns us all to do ſo, for we can never be ſaved but by Chriſt, nor by him, unleſs we be his diſciples; neither can we be his diſciples, unleſs we do what here is required of us. And therefore, if we care not whether we be ſaved or no, we may think no more of theſe things, nor trouble our heads about them; but if we really deſire to come to heaven, let us remember he who alone can bring us thither, hath told us, that *we muſt deny ourſelves, and take up our croſs, and follow him.*

*Thoughts upon our Call and Election.*

MANY *are called* (ſaith our Saviour, *Mat.* xxii. 14.) *but few choſen.* O dreadful ſentence, who is able to hear it without trembling and aſtoniſhment! If he had ſaid, that of all men that are born in the world there are but few ſaved, this would not have ſtruck ſuch a fear and horror into us; for we might ſtill hope that though Turks, Jews, and Heathens, which are far the greateſt part of the world, ſhould all periſh, yet we few in compariſon of them, who are baptized into his name, who profeſs his goſpel, who enjoy his ordinances, who are admitted to his ſacraments, that all who are called to him, might be choſen and ſaved by him; but that of thoſe very perſons who are called, there are but few choſen: What a ſharp and terrible ſentence is this? Who can bear it? Eſpecially conſidering by whom it was pronounced, even by Chriſt himſelf. If a mere man had ſpoken it, we might hope it was but a human error; if an angel had uttered it, we might think it poſſible he might be miſtaken; but that Chriſt himſelf the eternal Son of God, who is truth, and infallibility itſelf, that he ſhould aſſert it; that he who laid down his life to redeem ours, that he who came into the world on purpoſe to call and ſave us, that he in whom alone it is poſſible for us to be choſen to ſalvation, that he ſhould ſay, *Many are called but few choſen:* This is an hard ſaying indeed, which may juſtly make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble at the hearing of it. And yet we ſee our Saviour here expreſly ſaith it, and not only hear neither, but again, *Mat.* xx. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing he would have us often think of, and a matter of more than ordinary importance, in that he did not think it enough to tell us of it at once, but he repeated it in the ſame words again, that we might be ſure to remember it, and take eſpecial notice of it, that *many are called but few choſen.*

In which words, that we may underſtand our Saviour's meaning aright, we muſt firſt conſider the occaſion of them in this place, which in brief was this. Our Saviour according to the cuſtom that obtained in thoſe days amongſt the wiſe men of the eaſt, delighting to uſe parables, thereby to re-

preſent his heavenly doctrine more clearly to the underſtanding of his hearers; in this chapter compares the *kingdom of God to a certain king that made a marriage for his ſon, and ſent his ſervants, to call them that were bidden to the wedding*, v. 2, 3. Where, by the king, he means the eternal God, the univerſal monarch of the world, who intending to make a marriage betwixt his Son and the church, ſtiled the ſpouſe of Chriſt, he ſent to his gueſts before bidden, even the Jews, the ſeed of Abraham his friend, and at that time his peculiar people. But they not hearkening to the firſt invitation, he ſends to them again, *v.* 4. Yet they ſtill made light of it, having, it ſeems, as we moſt have, other buſineſs to mind, and therefore went their way, ſome to their farms, others to their merchandize, *v.* 5. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reaſon why men accept not of the overtures of grace made unto them in the goſpel, is, becauſe their minds are taken up with the cares of this world, looking upon their farms, their trades and merchandize, as things of greater moment than heaven and eternal glory. Yea, ſome of them took the ſervants which were ſent to invite them, *and treated them ſpitefully, and ſlew them*, v. 6. Why, what is the matter? What injury have the Servants, the Prophets, the Apoſtles, or miniſters of Chriſt done them? What, do they come to oppreſs them, to take their eſtates from them? To diſgrace or bring them into bondage? No, they only come to invite them to a marriage feaſt, to tender them the higheſt comforts and refreſhments imaginable both for their ſouls and bodies. And this is all the recompence they give them for their kindneſs, not only to refuſe it, but to abuſe them that bring it? Well might this glorious King be angry and incenſed at ſuch an affront offered him as this was, and therefore, *he ſent forth his armies and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city*, v. 7. as we all know he did to the murdering Jews, who ſoon after this were deſtroyed, and their royal city Jeruſalem burnt. But now the feaſt is prepared, ſhall there be none to eat it? Yes, for ſeeing they who were firſt bidden were not worthy to partake of his dainties, he orders his ſervants to go into the high-ways, and bid as many as they could find to the marriage, *v.* 6, 9. The Jews having refuſed the goſpel, God ſends to invite the Gentiles to it, who hitherto had been reckoned aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, *ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. But now they are alſo bidden to the wedding, they are

called to Chriſt, and invited to partake of all the privileges of the goſpel. For the ſervants having received the command, *went out into the high-way*, even into all the by-places and corners of the world, *and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts*, v. 10. But amongſt theſe too, when the king came to ſee his gueſts, he ſaw one that had not on a wedding-garment, *v.* 11. Under which one are repreſented all of the ſame kind, who have not on the wedding-garment, that is, who walk not worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, not being clothed with humility, faith, and other graces ſuitable to a Chriſtian. All which, notwithſtanding they were invited, yea, and come in too upon their invitation, yet they are caſt out again into outer darkneſs, *Mat.* xx. 12, 13. And then he adds, *for many are called, but few choſen*; as if he ſhould have ſaid, the Jews were called but would not come; the Gentiles are called, they come, but ſome of them were caſt out again; ſo that of the many which are called, there are but few choſen. *For many are called, but few choſen.*

Which ſhort, but pithy ſaying of our bleſſed Saviour, that we may rightly underſtand, we ſhall firſt conſider the former part of it, *Many are called*, and then the latter, *but few choſen.* That we may apprehend the full meaning of the firſt part of this propoſition, *Many are called*, there are three things to be conſidered;

I. What is here meant by being called.

II. How men are called.

III. How it appears that *many are called.*

I. As for the firſt, what we are here to underſtand by being called. We muſt know that this is meant only of God's voice to mankind, making known his will and pleaſure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly, and ſo inviting them to his ſervice here, and to the enjoyment of his preſence hereafter.

But to explain the nature of it more particularly, we muſt conſider the *terminus a quo*, and the *terminus ad quod*, *what it is God calls us from, and what it is he calls to*, both which we ſhall ſpeak to, jointly or together.

1. He calls us from darkneſs to light, from error and ignorance to truth and knowledge. As he made us rational and knowing creatures at firſt, ſo he would have us to be again, ſo as to underſtand and know him that made us, and that gave us the power of underſtanding and knowing; and

not employ the little knowledge we have only about the affairs of our bodies, our trades, and callings in this world, nor yet in learning arts and ſciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal ſouls, that we may know him that is the true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent; without which, all our other knowledge will avail us nothing. We are ſtill in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by conſequence uncomfortable as well as dangerous eſtate, God of his infinite mercy is pleaſed to call us, that we *ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called us out of darkneſs into this marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

2. God calls us from ſuperſtition and idolatry, to ſerve and worſhip him. For we are called to turn *from idols to ſerve the living and true God*, 1 Theſ. i. 9. Thus he called Abraham out of Chaldea, and his poſterity the Iſraelites out of Egypt, places of idolatry, that they might ſerve and worſhip him, and him alone. Thus he called our anceſtors of this nation out of their heatheniſh ſuperſtitions to the knowledge and worſhip of himſelf, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And thus he called upon us to *flee from idolatry*, 1 Cor. x. 14. not only from heatheniſh or popiſh, but from all idolatry whatſoever, and by conſequence from covetouſneſs, which God himſelf tells us in plain terms is idolatry, *Col.* iii. 5. And ſo indeed is our allowing ourſelves in any known ſin whatſoever; for we idolize it by ſetting it up in our hearts and affections, inſtead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and ſerve it, though not in our bodies yet in our ſouls, which is the higheſt kind of idolatry, which God calls us from.

3. Hence he alſo calls from all manner of ſin and prophaneneſs, to holineſs and piety, both in our affections and actions. For, as the apoſtle ſaith, *God hath not called us to uncleanneſs but to holineſs*, 1 Theſ. iv. 7. Where by uncleanneſs he means all manner of luſts and corruptions which defile the ſoul, and make it unclean and impure in the ſight of God. Theſe God doth not call us to, but from: It is holineſs and univerſal righteouſneſs that he calls us to, and commands us to follow. This is the great thing that Chriſt in his goſpel calls for: *For the grace of God*, which is in his goſpel, *hath now appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world*, Titus ii. 11, 12. *He now commandeth all men every-where to repent* and turn to God, *Acts* xxvii. 30. Hence he is ſaid to have *called us with an holy*

*calling*, 2 Tim. i. 9. And as he who hath called us is holy, ſo ought we to be *holy in all manner of converſation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus therefore we are called to be an holy people, a people zealous of good works, a people wholly devoted to the ſervice of the living God. In brief we are called to be ſaints, a people conſecrated unto God; and therefore as every veſſel in the temple was holy, ſo we being called to be the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, every thing in us ſhould be holy; our thoughts ſhould be holy, our affections holy, our words holy, our deſires holy, every faculty of our ſouls, every member of our bodies, and every action of our lives, ſhould be holy, every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us ſhould be holy, and all becauſe our calling is holy; and we ought to *walk worthy of our vocation wherewith we are called*, Eph. iv. 1.

4. God calls us from carnal and temporal things, to mind heaven and eternal glory. He ſees and obſerves how eager we are in proſecuting of this world's vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doating upon ſuch tranſitory and unſatisfying trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlaſting peace; not to be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we *may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God*, Rom. xii. 2. To ſet our *affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon the earth*, Col. iii. 2. To *ſeek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs* in the firſt place, *Matth.* vi. 33. Hence it is ſtyled *an heavenly calling*, Heb. iii. 1. and *an high calling*, Phil. iii. 14. becauſe we are called by it to look after high and heavenly things. He that made us hath ſo much kindneſs for us, that it pities him to ſee us moil and toil, and ſpend our ſtrength and labour about ſuch low and pitiful, ſuch impertinent and unneceſſary things, which himſelf knows can never ſatisfy us; and therefore he calls and invites us to himſelf, and to the enjoyment of his own perfections, which are able to fill and ſatiate our immortal ſouls.

5. Hence laſtly, we are called from miſery and danger, to the ſtate of happineſs and felicity. As he called Lot out of Sodom, when fire and brimſtone were ready to fall upon it; ſo he calls us from the world and ſin, becauſe otherwiſe wrath and fury will fall upon our heads. Or, as he called Noah into the ark, to preſerve him from the overflowing flood; ſo he calleth us into his ſervice, and to the faith of his Son, that ſo we may eſcape that flood of miſery which will ſuddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving world. And therefore

we muſt not think that he calls and invites to him, becauſe he ſtands in need of us, or wants our ſervice; no, it is not becauſe he cannot be happy without us, but becauſe we cannot be happy without him, nor in him neither, unleſs we come unto him. This is the only reaſon why he calls us ſo earneſtly to him: *For as I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael!* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Let us not ſtand therefore pauſing upon it, and conſidering whether we ſhall hearken to God's call or no, nor ſay ſeverally within ourſelves, how ſhall I part with my profits? How ſhall I deny myſelf the enjoyment of my ſenſual pleaſures? How ſhall I forſake my darling and beloved ſins? But rather ſay, how ſhall I abide the judgment of the great God? How ſhall I eſcape if I neglect ſo great ſalvation as I am now called and invited to? For we may aſſure ourſelves this is the great and only end why God calls ſo pathetically upon us to come unto him, that ſo we may be delivered from his wrath, and enjoy his love and favour for ever.

Thus we ſee what it is that God calls mankind both from and to; he calls them from darkneſs to light, from idolatry to true religion, from ſin to holineſs, from earth to heaven, and from the deepeſt miſery, to the higheſt happineſs that they are capable of.

II. The next thing to be conſidered is, how God is pleaſed to call us; for which we muſt know, that,

1. He that vouchſafed to call ſome with his own mouth, as I may ſo ſpeak, even by immediate revelations from himſelf. Thus he called Abraham and Moſes, and ſeveral of the patriarchs of the Old Teſtament. And thus he called Paul, Chriſt himſelf calling from heaven to him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Acts ix. 4. And it is obſervable, that whoſoever were thus called, they always obeyed. But this is not the calling here ſpoken of.

2. God calls all mankind by his works and providences. All the creatures in the world are ſo many tongues declaring the wiſdom, power, goodneſs, and glory of God, unto us, and ſo call upon us to praiſe, honour, and obey him. And all his providences have their ſeveral and diſtinct voices; his mercies beſpeak our affections, and his judgments our fear. Hear ye, ſaith he, *the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Micah vi. 9. The rod, it ſeems, hath a voice which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea all the world be called this

way, yet neither is this the calling our Saviour means, when he ſaith, *many are called, but few choſen.*

3. Laſtly, therefore God hath called many by the miniſtry of his word, and of his ſervants the Prophets, the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors declaring it, and explaining it to them. Thus God ſpake to our fathers by the prophets, riſing up early, and ſending them to call ſinners to repentance, by ſhewing them their ſins, and the dangerous conſequents of them. As when he ſent his prophet Iſaiah, he bids him *cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and ſhew my people their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins,* Iſaiah lviii. 1. And they being convinced of, and humbled for their ſins, then he ſent his prophets to invite them to accept of grace and pardon from him, ſaying in the language of the ſame prophet, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,* Iſa. lv. 1, 2, 3. And God having thus *at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpoken in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds,* Heb. i. 1, 2. Who therefore ſaid with his own mouth, that *He came not to call the righteous but ſinners to repentance,* Mat. ix. 13. Hence as ſoon as ever he entered upon his miniſtry, he called to mankind, ſaying, *Repent, and believe the goſpel,* Mark i. 15. And *come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,* Mat. xi. 28. And when he was to depart hence, he left orders with his Apoſtles, to go and call all nations, and teach them what he had commanded, promiſing that himſelf would be with them *to the end of the world,* Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. By virtue therefore of this commiſſion, not only the apoſtles themſelves, but all ſucceeding miniſters in all ages to the end of the world, are ſent to call mankind to embrace the goſpel, and to accept of the terms propounded in it. So that when we his miniſters preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they muſt not think we come in our own name; for, as the apoſtle tells the *Corinthians, we are the ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God,* 2 Cor. v. 20. Hence in ſcripture we are called alſo *kerukes,* Heralds, and our office is *keruſſein, to proclaim as heralds,* the will and pleaſure of Almighty God unto mankind, to offer peace and pardon to all that have rebelled againſt our Lord and maſter the King of heaven, if

they will now come in, and ſubmit themſelves unto him; if not, in a moſt ſolemn and dreadful manner, to denounce his wrath and heavy diſpelaſure againſt them. So that as the Angel was ſent to call Lot out of Sodom, when the Lord was going to rain fire and brimſtone from heaven upon it: So God being ready every moment to ſhower down his fury and vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving world, he ſends us to call men out of it, *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts xxvi. 18. and to invite them to his court, to live with him, and be happy for ever.

And that this is the proper meaning of our bleſſed Saviour in this place, where he ſaith, *many are called*, is plain from the parable whereon theſe words are grounded; where the king is ſaid to have ſent his ſervants to call the gueſts which were bidden to the marriage-feaſt, and put words into their mouth, telling them what to ſay, *v.* 4. as he hath given us alſo inſtructions, how to call and invite mankind in his holy word. And when of the many which were called, there would but few come; hence our Saviour uttered this expreſſion, that *many are called, but few choſen*. From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not ſuch as were called immediately from God himſelf, for they were but few; nor yet ſuch as are called by the works of creation and providence, for ſo not many only, but all are called; but he means ſuch as are called by his word, and by his ſervants and miniſters reading, preaching, and explaining of it.

III. And verily that many have been, and ſtill are called in this ſenſe, which is the next thing I promiſed to ſhew, I need not ſtand long to prove. For our Saviour, having commanded his apoſtles to go and call all nations to his faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. it cannot be denied, but that the apoſtles preſently diſperſed themſelves, and preached the goſpel to all nations; which they did ſo effectually, that in few years after, even in St. Paul's time, *The myſtery of the goſpel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*, Rom xvi. 26. And in St. John's *time, ſome were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, Rev. vii. 9. Yea, ſo mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the ancients compared it to lightening, that immediately diſperſed itſelf, and was ſeen all the world over. So that in leſs than two hundred years, *ab ortu ſolis ad occaſum lex Chriſtiana ſuſcepta eſt*, *The Chriſtian religion was received all the world over*

*from eaſt to weſt*, as *Lactantius*, who then lived, aſſerts. From which time therefore, how many thouſands of millions of ſouls have been called to the faith of Chriſt by the preaching of his goſpel? And not to ſpeak of other nations, how ſoon did the Sun of righteouſneſs riſe upon theſe weſtern parts of the world, and particularly upon this nation, wherein we dwell; ſeveral of Chriſt's own diſciples and apoſtles, as Simon Peter, Simon Zelotes, James the ſon of Zebedee, Joſeph of Arimathea, Ariſtobulus, and St. Paul himſelf, being all recorded, by eccleſiaſtical writers, to have preached the goſpel to this nation. Be ſure in leſs than two hundred years the Chriſtian faith was here received. Tertullian himſelf ſaying expreſly, *Britannorum inacceſſa Romanis loca, Chriſto ſubdita: The* Romans *could ſcarcely come at* Brittany, *but* Chriſt *hath conquered it.* And ſoon after him, Arnobius ſaith that the goſpel, *Nec ipſos Indos latuis a parte orientis, nec ipſos Britannos, a parte Occidentis, Was not concealed either from the* Indians *in the Eaſtern parts of the world, nor from the* Britons *themſelves in the Weſt.* And ſince the goſpel was firſt here planted, how many have been called by it to the faith of Chriſt? Yea, through the mercy of the moſt High God, how many at this moment are called all the nation over? And to come ſtill cloſer to ourſelves, all that read this have, I doubt not, been often called heretofore, and now are called again. For in the name of the moſt high God, and of his ſon *Chriſt*, *I pray and beſeech you all, as ſtrangers and pilgrims, to abſtain from fleſh'ly luſts which war againſt the ſoul*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. to repent of your ſins, and believe the goſpel. I call and invite you alſo to accept the offers of grace and pardon which are made you in Jeſus Chriſt, to ſit down with him at his own table, and feed by faith upon his body and blood, that ſo you may partake of the merits of his death and paſſion, and ſo live with him for evermore. Thus you are all called, but I fear there are but few choſen.

Having thus explained and proved the firſt part of this propoſition, that *many are called*, we muſt now conſider the meaning, truth and reaſons of the other part of it, *but few are choſen. Polloi gar eiſi kletoi; holigoi de eklektoi. For many are called, but few choſen*; that is, there are but few which are ſo approved of by God, as to be elected and choſen from the other part of the world, to inherit eternal life. That this is the main drift and ſcope of our bleſſed Saviour in theſe words, is plain from the forogoing parable, which gave him occaſion to pronounce them: For there all that

were firſt called refuſed to come to the marriage-feaſt which they were invited to, and of them which came, ſome had not on their wedding garment; that is, although they came in to the outward profeſſion of the goſpel, yet did not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewiſe were excluded; upon which our Saviour adds theſe words, *For many are called, but few choſen.* From whence it is eaſy to obſerve his meaning in general to be only this, that although many were called to partake of the privileges and graces of his goſpel, yet ſeeing of thoſe who were called, many would not come at all, and of thoſe who come, many do not come ſo as the goſpel requires of them, with their wedding garment on; hence of the many who are called, there are but few choſen to partake of the marriage feaſt, that is of the glorious promiſes made in the goſpel, to thoſe that come aright unto it. Few, not abſolutely in themſelves conſidered, but few comparatively in reſpect of the many which are not choſen; or rather few in compariſon of the many which are called. For if we conſider them abſolutely in themſelves, they are certainly very many, our Saviour himſelf ſaith, *Many ſhall come from eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham,* &c. Mat. viii. 11. And in the Revelations you read of many thouſands that were ſealed of every tribe. Yea, *there was a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white, and palms in their hands,* Rev. vii. 9. Inſomuch that for all the numberleſs number of fallen or apoſtatized angels, St. Auſtin was of opinion, that there will be as many men ſaved, as there are angels damned, or rather more. For, ſaith he, upon the fall of the angels and men, he determined to gather together, by his infinite grace, ſo many out of the mortal progeny, *ut inde ſuppleat et inſtauret partem quæ lapſa eſt angelorum, that he might from thence make up and reſtore that part of angels which was fallen; ac ſic illa dilecta et ſupera civitas non fraudetur ſuarum numero civium, quinetiam fortaſſis et uberiore lætetur. And ſo that beloved city which is above, may not be deprived of the number of its citizens, but perhaps rejoice in having more.* Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 22. c. 1. Which notion he grounds upon thoſe words of our Saviour in this chapter, *For in the reſurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are iſangeloi, as the angels of God in heaven,* Mat. xxii. 30. Or, as the words may be interpreted, they are

equal to the angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect angels, as that learned and pious father expounds it. But howſoever that be, this is certain, that the number of men choſen and ſaved will be very great, conſidered abſolutely in themſelves; and yet notwithſtanding, if they be compared with the many more which are called, they are but very few. Chriſt's flock is, as himſelf ſtyles it, *mikron poimnion*, a very little, little flock, *Luke* xii. 32. that is, in compariſon of the vaſt multitudes of ſouls that flock after the world and ſin. As in a garden there are few but choice flowers in compariſon of the weeds that grow in it, there are but very few diamonds and precious ſtones in compariſon of pebbles and gravel upon the ſea-ſhore; in the richeſt mines there is far more droſs than gold and ſilver. So is it in the church of Chriſt; there is but little wheat, in compariſon of the tares that come up with it; Chriſt hath a great many hangers-on, but few faithful and obedient ſervants; there are many that ſpeak him very fair, and make a very plauſible profeſſion of the faith and religion which he taught, but where ſhall we find one that practiſeth it? If there be here one, and there another, two or three in a pariſh, or perhaps in a whole city, what is this to the innumerable company of ſuch as are called by him, and baptized into his name, and yet leave him to follow after the world and vanity? Oh, what juſt ground had our Saviour to ſay, *Many are called, but few choſen?*

But to demonſtrate the truth of this propoſition ſtill more fully, and as clearly as poſſibly I can, I muſt firſt lay down one principle as a Poſtulatum, which I ſuppoſe all will acknowledge to be true, and that is this, that whatſoever profeſſion a man makes of the Chriſtian religion, it will avail him nothing without the practiſe of it; or if you will it take in our Saviour's own words, *Not every one*, ſaith he, *that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, Mat. vii. 21. Or, as the apoſtle expreſſeth it, *For not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified*, Rom. ii. 13. That is, it is not our hearing and knowing our duty that will ſtand us in any ſtead before God, but our doing of it; it is not our believing that we may be ſaved by believing in Chriſt, whereby we can be ſaved, without actual believing in him, without ſuch a faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and ſalvation of our immortal ſouls, and conſequently for the aſſiſtance of

his grace and ſpirit, whereby we may he enabled to obey his goſpel, and to perform all ſuch things as himſelf hath told us are neceſſary in order to our everlaſting happineſs: And whatſoever faith we pretend to, unleſs it comes to this, that it puts us upon univerſal obedience to all the commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good, for it is not ſuch a faith as Chriſt requires, which always works by love, conquers the world, ſubdues ſin, purifies the heart, and ſanctifies the whole ſoul whereſoever it comes. It is ſuch a faith as this which is the wedding-garment, without which no man is choſen or admitted to partake of thoſe celeſtial banquets, which Chriſt our Saviour hath provided for us. And therefore no man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himſelf to be elected or choſen to eternal ſalvation, that is not holy in all manner of converſation; God himſelf having told us expreſly, *that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii 14. So that having God's own word for it, we may poſitively and confidently aſſert, that no man in the world can upon any juſt grounds be reputed as choſen by God, that doth not in all things, to the utmoſt of his power, conform himſelf, and adjuſt his actions to the laws and commands of God. So that how many ſoever are called, how many ſoever come into the outward profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, yet none of them can be ſaid to be choſen, but ſuch as are real and true ſaints. And how few thoſe are, is a matter which we have more cauſe to bewail than to prove. Howſoever, that we may ſee that we have but too much reaſon, to believe this aſſertion of our bleſſed Saviour, that *many are called, but few choſen*, I deſire we may but conſider the ſtate of Chriſtendom in general, and weigh the lives and actions of all ſuch as profeſs to believe in Chriſt, view them well, and examine them by the goſpel rules, and then we ſhall ſoon conclude that there are but few choſen; or to bring it home more cloſely to ourſelves, who are all called, and take out from amongſt us all ſuch perſons as come not up to the terms of the goſpel, and we ſhall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed who can be diſcerned and judged by the light either of reaſon or ſcripture, to be choſen by God to eternal life. For take out from amongſt us,

1. All atheiſtical perſons, who though they are baptized into the name of Chriſt, and ſo are called to the faith of Chriſt, yet neither believe in Chriſt nor God, ſuch fools as ſay in their heart *there is no God*, Pſal. xiv. 1. For all will grant, that they are not choſen by God, who do not ſo much

as believe that there is any God to chuſe them. Neither can it be imagined that the all-wiſe God ſhould chuſe ſuch fools as theſe to be with him, who will not ſo much as acknowledge him to be. And yet how many ſuch fools have we amongſt us, whoſe practices have ſo depraved their principles, that they will not believe there is any God, becauſe they wiſh there was none? And when theſe are taken from amongſt the called, I fear the number of the choſen amongſt them will be much leſſened.

2. Take out from amongſt us all ignorant perſons, that underſtand not the common principles of religion, or the fundamental articles of that faith which they are called to: For that theſe are not choſen, is plain, in that though they be called by Chriſt, yet they know not what he would have them do, nor yet who it is that calls them. And therefore as God would have all men to be ſaved, ſo for that end he would have them come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 *Tim.* ii. 4. That is, he would have them know all ſuch truths as himſelf hath revealed to them in the goſpel, as neceſſary to be known in order to their eternal ſalvation, without which knowledge it is impoſſible for a man to perform what is required of him; for though a man may know his duty, and not do it, no man can do his duty unleſs he firſt know it. And therefore groſs ignorance and ſaving faith cannot poſſibly conſiſt or ſtand together: For ſaving faith is always joined with, or puts a man upon ſincere obedience to all the commands of God: But how can any man obey the commands of God, who neither knows that God whoſe commands they are, nor yet what theſe commands are, which God will have him to obey? No certainly, a blind man may as well follow his temporal calling, how intricate ſoever it be, as he that is groſly ignorant, the high calling of a Chriſtian; for he is altogether incapable of it, and ſo not only unworthy, but unfit to be choſen to it. Hence God himſelf hath told us, that he is ſo far from chuſing ſuch as live and die in this manner without underſtanding, that he will never ſhew them any mercy or favour. *For it is a people*, ſaith he, *of no underſtanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour*, Iſa. xxvii. 11. Neither doth he ever blame mankind for any thing in the world more than for not knowing, and therefore not conſidering him that made and feeds them, *Iſa.* i. 2, 3. *Hoſ.* iv. 1. And that we may be ſtill farther aſſured that he chuſeth no ſuch perſons to dwell with him, as do not know him and his com-

mands, he hath given it us under his hand, that he rejects them, saying, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* Hos. iv. 6.

That therefore no persons that are grosly ignorant, and live and die in that condition, are chosen to eternal salvation, I suppose, the premisses considered, all will acknowledge. But alas! how many such persons are there in the world, how many amongst ourselves? How many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any worldly business, but are meer novices, or rather idiots in matters of true religion: Or, as the prophet words it, *Who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge?* Jer. iv. 22. How many such ignorant and sottish people are there in every corner of the land? and in this city itself! where they do or may hear the word of God read and expounded to them every day, and yet ask them seriously of the grounds of the Christian religion, and the reason of the hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a satisfactory or rational answer, than if they had never heard of any such book as the bible in the world, or had been born and bred in the remotest corners of America, where the sound of the gospel never yet came. But all such, how many soever they be, though they be called, they must stand aloof off; for so long as they are such, we may be confident they are not chosen. Insomuch, that should we take away no other from the number of the called, but only such as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.

3. Take out from amongst us all vicious, profane, debauched and impenitent persons, all that make a mock of sin, and that jeer at holiness, that live as without God in the world, as if they had neither God to serve, nor souls to save; as if there was neither a hell to avoid nor a heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their business to gratify their flesh, and to indulge their appetite with carnal and sensual pleasures, looking no higher than to be fellow-sharers with the brutes that perish; such as in their bewitching cups stick not to fly in the face of heaven itself, and dare challenge God himself to damn them; and make lying their usual dialect, and swearing their pleasing rhetorick; and are so far from being troubled for their sins, that they take pleasure and delight in them; so far from being ashamed of them, that they make them their pride

and glory, and ſo make it their pleaſure to diſpleaſe God, and their higheſt honour to diſhonour him that is honour and perfection itſelf. For that no ſuch perſons as theſe who live and die in ſuch notorious crimes upon earth, are choſen to live with God in heaven, none can deny that believes the ſcriptures to be true, which in plain terms aſſure us of the contrary. *Know ye not*, ſaith the apoſtle, *that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with mankind; nor Thieves nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And St. John tells us, that only they who do the commandments enter into the city of heaven: But *without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye*, Rev. xxii. 14, 15. So that all ſuch perſons without timely repentance, are moſt certainly excluded from the number of the choſen. And how many are there amongſt us, who allow themſelves in ſome ſuch ſin or other; or rather where ſhall we find a man that doth not? But to all perſons that continue in ſuch ſin, I may ſay, ſtand you by, you have no ground as yet to think that you are choſen, but have rather all the reaſon in the world to believe, that if you go on in ſuch a ſinful courſe, you will never know what heaven or happineſs is. But when all ſuch are taken out of the number of the called, what a pitious ſcantling will be left behind! In plain terms, we have juſt cauſe to fear that ignorant and diſſolute perſons make up the greateſt part of thoſe who are called Chriſtians.

4. Take out from amongſt us all hypocritical and falſe-hearted perſons, that ſeem indeed to be honeſt and good men, but ſtill retain ſome ſecret ſin or other, which will as certainly keep them out of heaven, as the moſt notorious and ſcandalous crime that is; ſuch as our Saviour compares to whited ſepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, *but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanneſs*, Matth. xxiii. 27. Such whoſe outward converſation is altogether unblameable; ſo that no man can charge them with theft, perjury, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, and the like; but in the mean while, they are malicious, uncharitable, cenſorious, proud, ſelf conceited, diſobedient to parents or magiſtrates, covetous, ambitious, and the like. And ſo though they be free from thoſe ſins, which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad ſins, which the others may be freed

from. To which alſo may be added all ſuch as make indeed a greater ſhew of piety, and ſeem mighty zealous for the little circumſtances of religion, but neglect the weightier matters of the law, the love of God, mercy, juſtice, and the like. But for all the vain hopes and high conceits that ſuch perſons may have of themſelves, they are far from being ſuch as the goſpel requires of them, and by conſequence from the number of the choſen here ſpoken of. For the Phariſees were ſuch perſons as theſe, and yet our Saviour himſelf tells us, *That except our righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, we ſhall in no ways enter into the kingdom of God*, Mat. vi. 20. And when he tells us elſewhere, *That except we repent we muſt all likewiſe periſh*, Luke xiii. 3. his mending is, not that we muſt repent of ſome, or many, or moſt, but of all our ſins, and ſo repent of them as to turn from them; and ſo turn from all ſin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of converſation, otherwiſe our Saviour himſelf aſſures us that he will never ſave us, but we muſt periſh without remedy.

Let any man conſider this, and then tell me what he thinks of the number of the choſen, whether it be not very ſmall indeed, in compariſon of the many which are called. For not to ſpeak of other parts of Chriſtendom, all the people of this nation are called, are called to the faith of Chriſt; and how many they are, I cannot ſay we all know, for it is paſt any man's knowledge. But where is the man amongſt us all, that doth not harbour ſome ſecret luſt or other in his boſom; yea, of the many men in this nation, where is he that can ſay with David, *I have kept myſelf from mine iniquity?* Or, to uſe the words of the prophet, *Run ye to and fro through the ſtreets of the city, and ſee now and know, and ſeek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that ſeeketh the truth, that ſerveth the Lord with a perfect heart, and a willing mind.* I do not deny, but there are a great many profeſſors of religion amongſt us, who would fain be accounted more ſtrict and holy than their neighbours are, ſo as to be reckoned the religious; as the friars and nuns are in the church of Rome: But they are therefore to be eſteemed the elect and choſen of God, becauſe they fancy themſelves to be ſo? Or rather is not their pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs an argument that they are not ſo? Bleſſed be God for it, I have no ſpleen nor rancour againſt any of them, but heartily wiſh they were as truly good and holy as they would ſeem to be. But what? Is not pride a ſin? Is not ſelf-conceitedneſs a ſin? Is

not irreverence in God's worſhip a ſin? Is not diſobedience to magiſtrates a ſin? Is not uncharitableneſs or cenſoriouſneſs a ſin? Certainly all theſe will be found to be ſins another day. And therefore whatſoever pretences men make unto religion, if they allow themſelves in ſuch ſins as theſe, they are as far from being in the number of the choſen, as the moſt diſſolute and ſcandalous perſons in the world: But when theſe two are removed from the called, how few of them will appear to be choſen?

5. Yet once again. Take out all ſuch as believe not in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but being morally honeſt and faithful in performing their duty to God and man, truſt more in their own good works than to his merit and mediation. For that all ſuch are to be excluded, is plain from the whole tenor of the goſpel, which aſſures us, that there is no ſalvation to be had but only by Jeſus Chriſt; nor by him neither, but only by believing in him. But if Chriſt ſhould come this day to judgment, would we find faith upon earth? Verily, I fear, he would find but very little, if any at all amongſt us: He might, I believe, find ſome pretty ſtrict and circumſpect in obeying of his other laws, or at leaſt in endeavouring to do ſo. But for a man to do all that is required of him, and yet to count himſelf an unprofitable ſervant; for a man to do all he can, and yet reſt upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jeſus Chriſt for life and happineſs; this is hard indeed to fleſh and blood, and as rare to find as it is to find a roſe among the weeds and thiſtles of a barren wilderneſs, or a diamond amongſt the gravel upon the ſea-ſhore; here and there I believe there may be found one, but ſo rarely, that they can ſcarce be termed any, be ſure but very few in compariſon of the many who are called.

Now, let us put theſe things together, and we ſhall eaſily grant that this ſaying of our Saviour was but too true, that *many are called, but few choſen.* And to bring it cloſer to ourſelves, we are all called to repent, and believe the goſpel: Now take out from amongſt us all ignorant perſons that have heard indeed, but underſtand not what they hear; all atheiſtical perſons, that believe not really there is a God to judge them; all debauched ſinners that live in open and notorious crimes; all Phariſaical hypocrites that avoid open, but indulge themſelves in ſecret ſins, that have *the form but not the power of Godlineſs*; and all ſuch who are as St. Paul was before his converſion, *as touching the righteouſneſs of the law blameleſs*, but yet believe not in Jeſus Chriſt. Take

out, I ſay, all ſuch perſons as I have named from amongſt us, and what a ſmall number proportionably ſhould we have left behind? how many would be excluded the preſence of God? how few would continue in it! What cauſe ſhould we then have to ſay with our Saviour, *that many are called, but few choſen.*

Having thus explained the meaning, and confirmed the truth of this propoſition, that many are called, but few choſen, we muſt conſider the reaſons of it, how it comes to paſs that of the many which are called there are but few choſen: A thing which I confeſs we have all juſt cauſe to wonder and admire at: Are not all men rational creatures? Are they not able to diſtingniſh betwixt good and evil? Do not they underſtand their own intereſt? What then ſhould be the reaſon that ſo many of them ſhould be called and invited to the chiefeſt good, the higheſt happineſs their natures are capable of, yet ſo few of them ſhould mind or proſecute it, ſo as to be choſen or admitted into the participation of it? What ſhall we aſcribe it to, the will and pleaſure of Almighty God, as if he delighted in the ruin of his creatures, and therefore although he calls them, he would not have them to come unto him? No, that cannot be; for in his revealed will, which is the only rule that we are to walk by, he hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it too with an oath, ſaying, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that he ſhould turn from his way and live.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And elſewhere he aſſures us, that he would *have all men ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,* 1 Tim. ii. 4. And therefore if we believe what God ſaith, nay, if he believe what he hath ſworn, we muſt needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleaſure, that as many as are called, ſhould be all choſen and ſaved. And indeed, if he had no mind that we ſhould come when we are called to him, why ſhould he call us to come? Why hath he given us his word, his miniſters, his ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all he was reſolved not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us that we ſhould ever have ſuch hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and governor of the world, eſpecially conſidering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was poſſible for him to expreſs his mind to us. I do not deny, but that according to the Apoſtle, *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,* Acts xv. 18. And there are ſeveral paſſages in

ſcripture which intimate unto us God's eternal election of all that are truly pious, to live with him for ever. But it is not for us to be ſo bold and impudent, as to pry into the ſecrets of God, nor ſo curious as to ſearch into his eternal and incomprehenſible decrees; but we muſt ſtill remember the words of *Moſes, that ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of his law*, Deut. xxix. 29. Whatſoever is neceſſary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal ſalvation, is clearly revealed to us in the holy ſcriptures, and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any farther than to his revealed will. But God in the ſcriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elſewhere, that he is *not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. This is the revealed will of God, which we are to acquieſce in, and reſt fully ſatisfied with, ſo as to act accordingly, without concerning ourſelves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not his ſecret, but revealed will, that we are to ſearch for the reaſons of this propoſition, that *many are called, but few choſen.*

Now conſulting the word of God, to find out the reaſons of this ſo ſtrange aſſertion, That many are called, and few choſen, I know no better or fitter place to ſearch for them than this parable, which gave our bleſſed Saviour the occaſion of aſſerting it; in which it is very obſervable that he meddles not at all with any reaſons *a priori*, deduced from the eternal decrees of his Father, but he only ſuggeſts to us the reaſons *a poſteriori*, drawn from the diſpoſition and carriage of men, why ſo many are called, and yet ſo few choſen.

For the opening whereof we muſt know that the end and intent of this parable, was only to ſhew the entertainment which his goſpel had then, and ſhould ſtill meet with in the world; many refuſing to embrace it at all, and of thoſe who embrace it, many ſtill walking unworthy of it. So that the iſſue and conſequence of it will be, that tho' many be called to it, there are but few choſen. And he hath ſo worded the parable that we need not ſeek any farther for the reaſons of this concluſion from it, they being almoſt clearly couched in the parable itſelf; which that we may the better underſtand, I ſhall open and explain them particularly, ſo as to make them intelligible, I hope, to the meaneſt capacity.

I. The firſt reaſon therefore why ſo many are called, but ſo few choſen, is becauſe they who are called to Chriſt, will not come unto him; for this is the firſt reaſon which our Saviour himſelf in the parable aſſigns for it: "The king, ſaith "he, ſent his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the "marriage, and they would not come," Mat. xxiii. 3. And they would not come; ſo that the great fault is ſtill in the wills of men, which are generally ſo depraved and corrupt, that though they be called never ſo oft, and cannot but in reaſon acknowledge that it is their intereſt to come, yet they have ſo ſtrange an averſion to the holineſs and purity of the goſpel which they are called to, that they will not come unto it, only becauſe they will not; for here they who are firſt bidden, give no reaſon for their refuſal, only it is ſaid, they would not come. And good cauſe why, for when we have ſearched into all the reaſons imaginable, why men do not fully ſubmit themſelves to the obedience of the goſpel, they will all reſolve and empty themſelves into this, that they will not becauſe they will not. Let miniſters ſay what they can, let the ſcripture ſay what it will, let God himſelf ſay what he pleaſes, yet ſinners men are, and ſinners they will be, in ſpite of them all; as the prophet rebuking the people for their ſins, ſaid, *But thou ſaidſt, there is no hope; No, for I loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go*, Jer. ii. 25. And ſo it is to this day; we tell them of their ſins, and the dangerous conſequences of them; we tell them that they muſt not love the world, but ſeek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs in the firſt place; we tell them from Chriſt's own mouth, that except they repent and forſake their ſins, they muſt periſh; but they ſay in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for they have loved the world, and after it they will go, they have found pleaſure in the commiſſion of their ſins, and therefore they will commit them; Chriſt calls them to come unto him, and they know no reaſon why they ſhould not, but howſoever they will not come: If we were but once willing, the work was done; for what our wills are really inclined to, we cannot but uſe the utmoſt of our endeavour to attain. But the miſchief is, men read the goſpel, they hear Chriſt calling upon them to believe and obey it, but their wills are ſtill averſe from it, there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them, againſt ſuch exact and real holineſs, as the goſpel requires of them. So that if they periſh, they muſt blame themſelves for it, it is their own choice they chuſe and prefer their ſins, with all the miſeries that

attend them, before the goſpel of Chriſt, with all the glory and happineſs which is offered in it; and therefore as God ſaid to his people, *turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. ſo ſay I to theſe men, repent and believe the goſpel, for why will ye die, why will ye periſh eternally? Have you any reaſon for it? None in the world but your own wills. Chriſt hath told you in plain terms, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, John vi. 35. but if you will not come unto him, who can help that? Are not yourſelves only in fault? Will not your blood be upon your own heads? What could Chriſt have done more for you than he hath done? What could he have ſuffered more for you than he hath ſuffered? How could he call you to him more plainly or pathetically than he doth? But if after all this, you will not come unto him, you muſt even thank yourſelves for all the torments you muſt ere long ſuffer and undergo. And this is indeed the caſe of the greateſt part of mankind, that tho' they be called and invited to partake of all the merits of Chriſt's death and paſſion, yet they will not come unto him. And this is the firſt and great reaſon why ſo many are called, and yet ſo few choſen, *John* v. 40.

II. The ſecond reaſon is, becauſe men do not really believe that they are invited to ſuch glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour himſelf intimates in the parable. For when they who were bidden would not come upon the firſt invitation, as not believing the meſſage that thoſe ſervants brought them, the king ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, *Tell them which are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage*, Mat. xii. 4. When the firſt ſervants were not believed, he ſent others with fuller inſtructions, giving them orders to acquaint the gueſts, that all things were now ready, and to aſſure them that it was to a marriage-feaſt they were invited. But it ſeems, whatſoever the firſt or ſecond ſervants could ſay, it was to no purpoſe, they would not believe them, and therefore ſent them away as they came; whereby our Saviour exactly diſcovers to us the entertainment that his goſpel always did, and ſtill would meet with in the world. Before his own coming into the world, he ſent his prophets to invite mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their ſins might be blotted out, and their ſouls admitted into the grace and favour of Almighty God, and ſo

partake of eternal glory, which the prophets call men to, under the notion of a feaſt; *Feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,* Iſa. xxv. 6. which they called all men to, ſaying, *He, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters,* Iſa. lv. 1. But how their meſſage was received the ſame prophet declares, ſaying, *Who hath believeth our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Iſa. liii. 1. and ſo is it ſince. For when the prophets could not be credited, God afterwards ſent his apoſtles, and ſtill to this day is ſending ſervant after ſervant to invite men to grace and pardon, to heaven and eternal happineſs. But we his miniſters may ſtill ſay with the prophet, *Who hath believed our report?* We tell men that unleſs they repent and turn to God, iniquity will be their ruin; we tell them alſo, that if they believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they ſhall be ſaved, and if they be holy here, they ſhall be happy hereafter. But what ſignifies our telling them of theſe things, if they believe not what we ſay? And yet who doth? Men gives us the hearing, cenſure what they have heard, and that is all the uſe they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one truth that we make known or expound unto them; and this being the caſe not only of ſome few, but of the greateſt part of mankind, hence it comes to paſs, that ſo many are called and ſo few choſen; even becauſe they who are called do not believe it, and ſo it is all one with them whether they be called or no. Be ſure God chuſeth none but ſuch as believe the word he ſends unto them, for as the apoſtle ſaith, *God hath choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith.* James ii. 5. If they be not rich in faith, they are not for his purpoſe; and ſeeing there are but few that are ſo, hence of the many which are called, there are *but few choſen.*

III. Another reaſon why of the many which are called there are ſo few choſen, is becauſe they have no real eſteem or value for the things which they are called to; as it is in the parable, when the ſervants were ſent to call upon them to make haſte to the feaſt, becauſe all things were ready, it is ſaid that they made light of it, v. 5. They did not think it worth their while to go, though it was to a feaſt, a marriage-feaſt, yea to the marriage-feaſt of ſo great a perſon as the king's ſon: No, not tho' they were invited by the king himſelf unto it. Thus it was in antient time, and thus it is ſtill; the king of heaven ſends to invite men to his court, to lay aſide their filthy garments, and to put on the robes that

he hath prepared for them, that they be holy as he is holy, and ſo live with him and be happy for ever. But they make light of ſuch things as theſe, they can ſee no ſuch beauty in Chriſt, why they ſhould deſire him; no ſuch excellency in God himſelf, why they ſhould be in love with him; and as for heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no; though they be called, they matter not whether they be choſen to it or no; and hence likewiſe it is that of the many which are called, there are but few choſen.

IV. Another reaſon is, becauſe they who are called are generally addicted to the things of this life, they have the ſerpent's curſe upon them, to feed upon the duſt of the earth, and therefore ſlight all the overtures that are made them of heaven and eternal happineſs. As our Saviour himſelf intimates in this parable, ſaying, that *when they were invited they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandize*, ver. 5. Thus we read of the Phariſees, that they being covetous, when they heard the words of Chriſt, they derided him, *Luke* xvi. 14. And thus it is to this day; though men be called to Chriſt, they are ſo much taken up with worldly buſineſſes that they can find no time to come unto him; but away they go again, one to his trade, another to his merchandize. Theſe are the things that moſt men's minds are wholly bent upon, and therefore they will not be perſuaded to leave them to go to Chriſt.

It is true, if he called them to great eſtates, if he called them to a good bargain, if he called them to crowns and ſceptres in this world, then they would all ſtrive which ſhould be choſen firſt: But the things that he calls us to are quite of another nature; he calls us to repent of our ſins, to believe in him, to contemn the world, to have our converſations in heaven. But theſe are things which men do not love to hear of, as being contrary to their earthly temper and inclinations; and therefore, we who are God's miniſters may call our hearts out before they will ſet themſelves in good earneſt to mind them. Or to bring it home ſtill cloſer to us, how often have we all been invited to that ſpiritual feaſt, the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole congregation is called to partake it? ſcarce one in twenty think it worth their while to ſtay to have their ſhare in it. What can be the reaſon of this, but that our minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater concernment to us than all the merits of Chriſt's death

and paſſion? and therefore, it is no wonder that ſo many of us are called, and ſo few choſen, ſeeing we ourſelves chuſe the toys and trifles of this tranſient world, before all thoſe real joys which in the goſpel we are called and invited to.

V. In the next place, many of them which are called, have ſo ſtrange an antipathy to God and goodneſs, that they do not only ſlight their heavenly, in compariſon of their earthly calling; but they hate and abuſe ſuch as are ſent to call them, as our Saviour himſelf intimates, *v.* 6. O barbarous cruelty; what hurt, what injury is done unto them? They are invited to a feaſt, and for this they are angry, and kill the meſſengers which are ſent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all ages. This was the entertainment, this the requital that moſt of the prophets received for the divine meſſage they brought to mankind, *Mat.* xxiii. 37. Yea, Chriſt himſelf, the ſon and heir of God, was put to death for inviting men to life and happineſs, and ſo were his apoſtles too: And ſo it is to this day. There is ſtill a ſecret malice and hatred in men's hearts againſt ſuch as endeavour to preach the goſpel clearly and fully to them. We tell them of their ſins, we acquaint them of the danger they are in, we call upon them to forſake and avoid them, we invite them to Chriſt, and ſo to heaven and eternal happineſs; for this many of them are angry with us, and incenſed againſt us. They may forgive us this wrong, I can aſſure them we intend them no evil, but all the good we can do or deſire to our own ſouls; that whatſoever the ſucceſs be, it is ſtill our duty to call upon them, to adviſe them of their duty, and if poſſible to reclaim them from their ſins; and if they be angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's ſaying, that *many are called and few choſen.*

VI. The laſt reaſon which our Saviour gives in this parable, why *many are called, but few choſen*, is becauſe of thoſe who are called, and come too at their call, many come not aright, which he ſignifies by the man that came without his wedding garment, *ver.* 11, 12, 13, where although he mentions but one man, yet under that one is comprehended all of the ſame kind, even all ſuch perſons as have the goſpel preached to them, and ſo are called and invited to all the graces and privileges propoſed in it, all ſuch as profeſs to believe in Chriſt, and to expect happineſs and ſalvation from him, yet will not come up to the terms which he propounds in his goſpel to them, even to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called*, Eph. iv. 1. And indeed this is

the great reaſon of all, why of ſo many which are called there are ſo few choſen, becauſe there are ſo few which do all things which the goſpel requires of them. Many like Herod will do many things, *Mark* vi. 20. and are almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians, as Agrippa was, *Acts* xxvi. 8. How zealous are ſome for, how violently are others againſt, the little ceremonies and circumſtances of religion, and in the mean while neglect and let ſlip the power and ſubſtance of it? How demure are ſome in their carriage towards men, but irreverent and ſlovenly in the worſhip of Almighty God? How devout would others ſeem towards God, but are ſtill careleſs and negligent of their duty towards men? Some are all for the duties of the firſt table without the ſecond, others for the ſecond without the firſt. Some are altogether for obedience and good works, without faith in Chriſt; others are as much for faith in Chriſt, without obedience and good works. Some would do all themſelves, as if Chriſt had done nothing for them; others fancy that Chriſt hath ſo done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themſelves to do: And ſo betwixt both theſe ſorts of people, which are the far greater part of thoſe who are called, either the merits, or elſe the laws of Chriſt are ſlighted and contemned. But is this the way to be ſaved? No, ſurely: If I know any thing of the goſpel, it requires both repentance and faith in Chriſt, that we perform ſincere obedience to all his laws, and yet truſt in him, and him alone, for pardon, acceptance, and ſalvation. And whoſoever comes ſhort of this, though he be called, we may be ſure he is not choſen, though he come to the marriage feaſt with thoſe that are invited, yet wanting this wedding-garment, he will be caſt out again with ſhame and confuſion of face. So that it is not our doing ſome, or many, or moſt of the things which the goſpel requires, that will do our buſineſs, unleſs we do all to the utmoſt of our ſkill and power. But where ſhall we find the man that doth ſo? What ground have we but to acknowledge that our Saviour had too much cauſe to ſay, *Many are called, but few choſen*; which I fear is but too true, not only of others, but ourſelves too.

I ſay not this to diſcourage any one: No, it is my hearty deſire and prayer to the eternal God, that every ſoul of us might be choſen and ſaved. But my great fear is, that many think it ſo eaſy a matter to go to heaven, that if they do but ſay their prayers, and hear ſermons now and then, they cannot miſs of it, and therefore need not trouble themſelves any farther about it. But they muſt give me leave to

tell them, that this will not ſerve their turn; if it would, moſt of thoſe which are called would be choſen too. Whereas our Saviour himſelf tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging of us, that it ſhould rather excite us to greater diligence about it than heretofore we may have uſed, as our Saviour himſelf intimates in his anſwer to this queſtion, *Luke* xiii. 23, 24. And verily, what greater encouragement can we have, than to conſider, that though there be but few choſen, yet there are ſome? For why may not you and I be in the number of thoſe few as well as others? Are we not all called to Chriſt? Are not we all invited, yea, commanded to believe in his name, and obey his goſpel, that ſo we may partake of everlaſting glory? Let us then all ſet about that work in good earneſt, which we are called to. Let us but fear God, and keep his commandments, and but believe in his Son for his acceptance of us; and then we need not fear, for though of the many others which are called, there are but few choſen; yet we few who are called ſhall be all choſen; choſen to live with God himſelf, and Jeſus Chriſt, and to ſing forth his praiſes for evermore.

*Thoughts upon the appearance of Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, or the Beatifick Viſion.*

SO long as we are in the body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its ſenſes, ſeldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through one or other of them. Though we are all able to abſtract our thoughts when we pleaſe from matter, and fix them upon things that are purely ſpiritual, there are but few that ever do it. But few, even among thoſe alſo that have ſuch things revealed to them by God himſelf, and ſo have infinitely more and firmer ground to believe them, than any one, or all their ſenſes put together can afford. Such are the great truths of the goſpel, for which we have the infallible word and teſtimony of the ſupreme truth; yet ſeeing they are not the objects of ſenſe, but only of our faith, though we profeſs to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them, and are uſually no more affected with them, than as if there were no ſuch thing in be-

ing. Hence it hath pleaſed God, in great compaſſion to our infirmity, not only to reveal and make known ſuch ſpiritual things to us, in plain and eaſy terms, but likewiſe to bring them as near as poſſible to our ſenſes, by repreſenting them to us under the names and characters of ſuch ſenſible objects as bear the greateſt reſemblance to them; that we, who are led ſo much by our ſenſes, may by them alſo be directed how to apprehend thoſe ſpiritual objects which he hath told us of, on purpoſe that we may believe them upon his word.

Thus he often uſeth the words, hand, eye, and the like, to ſignify his own divine perfections to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the goſpel to the people, by parables and ſimilitudes of things commonly ſeen and done among themſelves. The prophets alſo frequently took the ſame courſe, as might be ſhewn by many inſtances; but one of the moſt remarkable is that in *Mal.* iv. 2. where the prophet in the name of God ſpeaking of Chriſt's coming into the world, expreſſes it by the riſing of the ſun, ſaying, *To you that fear my name ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings.*

For that Jeſus Chriſt is that Sun of righteouſneſs here ſpoken of, is ſo plain from the context, and the whole deſign of the prophet, that I need not inſiſt upon the proving of it; but ſhall only obſerve, that this being the laſt of all the prophets in the Old Teſtament, he ſhuts up his own and all the other prophecies with a clear prediction of Chriſt, and his Fore-runner John the Baptiſt, whom he calls Elijah, or Elias, and concludes his prophecy with theſe words concerning him, *Behold I will ſend you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he ſhall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, leſt I come and ſmite the earth,* (or rather the land) *with a curſe.* Mal. iv. 5, 6. For that by Elijah is here meant John the Baptiſt, we are aſſured by Chriſt himſelf, *Mat.* xi. 14. And it is very obſervable, that as this prophet ends the Old Teſtament with a prediction of Elias, ſo St. Luke begins the new with a relation how John the Baptiſt was born, and ſo came into the world a little before Chriſt, as the morning-ſtar that appeared before the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs.

But of the day which ſhall come at the riſing of that glorious Sun, the prophet ſaith, that it *ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, ſhall be ſtubble,*

*and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch,* v. 1. It will be a terrible day to thoſe that ſhall obſtinately refuſe to walk in the light of it; they ſhall be all conſumed, as we read the unbelieving Jews were at the deſtruction of Hieruſalem, that happened ſoon after that ſun was up. But then turning himſelf, as it were, to his own people, Almighty God, here by his prophet, chears and comforts them, ſaying to them, *But unto you that fear my name ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings,* &c. He ſhall ariſe to all, but to the other with ſuch a ſcorching heat as ſhall burn them up, to theſe with healing in his wings, or rays, ſo as not to hurt, but heal them of all their maladies.

Now that which I chiefly deſign by God's aſſiſtance, to ſhew from theſe words, is, what thoughts they ſuggeſt to us concerning our bleſſed Saviour, by calling him *the Sun of Righteouſneſs.* But to make the way as plain as I can, we muſt firſt conſider, to whom he is here ſaid to *ariſe with healing in his wings,* even to thoſe that fear the name of God; *i. e.* to thoſe who firmly believing in God, and being fully perſuaded of his infinite power, juſtice, and mercy, and alſo of the truth of all his threats and promiſes, ſtand continually in awe of him, not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend him, nor leave any thing undone, that he would have them do. Such, and ſuch only, can be truly ſaid to fear God. And therefore the fear of God in the ſcriptures, eſpecially of the Old Teſtament, is all along put for the whole duty of man. There being no duty that a man owes, either to God or his neighbour, but if he really fears God, he will endeavour all he can to do it. But this neceſſity ſuppoſes his belief in God, and his holy word, or rather proceeds originally from it. *For, he that cometh unto God,* ſo as to fear and obey him, *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him,* Heb. xi. 6. So that, as no man can believe in God, but he muſt needs fear him; ſo no man can fear God, unleſs he firſt believes in him. From whence it neceſſarily follows, that by thoſe who are here ſaid to fear the name of God, we can underſtand no other but only ſuch as are poſſeſſed with a firm belief in him, and with a full perſuaſion of the truth and certainty of thoſe divine revelations that he hath made of himſelf, and of his will to mankind, and therefore live accordingly.

Of theſe, and theſe only, it is here ſaid, that to them *ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings.* Not

to any other; no other being able to ſee his light, nor capable of thoſe healing influences that proceed from him. For though he be a Sun, he is not ſuch a Sun as we ſee with our bodily eyes in the firmament, but *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, ſhining in the higheſt heavens, beyond the reach of our ſenſes, viſible only to the eye of faith, the evidence of things not ſeen. Inſomuch, that although he be riſen, and darts down his beams to this lower world continually, yet they who have not faith, can neither ſee him, nor enjoy any more benefit by him, than as if he was not riſen, or did not ſhine at all. As if a man be born ſtark blind, though the ſun ſhine never ſo clear about him, he ſees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at noon day as much as at midnight; neither can ye ever make him underſtand what light or colours are; for having not that ſenſe, by which alone ſuch things can be perceived, he can never underſtand what you mean by ſuch things, ſo as to form any true notion of them in his mind: So it is in our preſent caſe; though the Sun of righteouſneſs be riſen, and ſhines moſt gloriouſly in the world, yet being the object only of our faith, without that a man can diſcern nothing of him. He may perhaps talk of light, but all the while he knows not what he means by the words he uſeth about it. For he uſeth them only as words in courſe, taken up from thoſe he talks with, without having any effect or operation at all upon his mind; whereas they who really believe God's word, and what is there revealed concerning the Sun of righteouſneſs, they ſee his light, they feel his heat, they experience the power and efficacy of his influences; and therefore, although they who have no faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they ſhall hear or read of him, yet they who have, and act it out of what they hear or read out of God's holy word concerning him, they will find their thoughts and apprehenſions of him cleared up, and their affections inflamed to him; ſo as to love and honour him for the future, as the fountain of all that ſpiritual life, and light, and joy they have: *For to them he will ariſe with healing in his wings.*

He did not only ariſe once, but he continually ariſeth to thoſe who believe in God, and fear him. For thus ſaith the Lord, *to you that fear my name ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings.* It is true, he ſpeaks more eſpecially of his incarnation, or viſible appearance in the world; but, by this manner of ſpeaking, he intimates withal that this Sun of righteouſneſs is always ſhining upon his faith-

ful people, more or leſs, in all ages from the beginning to the end of this world. For in that it is ſaid, *he ſhall ariſe*, it is plainly ſuppoſed that he was the Sun of Righteouſneſs before, and gave light unto the world, though not ſo clearly as when he was actually ariſen. As we ſee and enjoy the light of the ſun, long before he riſeth, from the firſt dawning of the day, though it grows clearer and clearer, all along as he comes nearer and nearer to his riſing: So the Sun of righteouſneſs began to enlighten the world as ſoon as it was darkened by ſin; the day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every age. Adam himſelf ſaw ſomething of this light, Abraham more; *Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day*, ſaith this glorious Sun, *he ſaw it, and was glad*, John viii. 56. David and the Prophets after him ſaw it moſt clearly, eſpecially this, the laſt of the Prophets; he ſaw this Sun in a manner riſing, ſo that he could tell the people that it would ſuddenly get above their horizon, *The Lord whom ye ſeek*, ſaith he, *ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple*, Mal. iii. 1. and acquaints them alſo with the happy influences it would have upon them, ſaying, in the name of God, *Unto you that fear my name ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings.*

'The Sun of Righteouſneſs;' that is, as I obſerved before, 'Jeſus Chriſt the righteous,' who is often foretold and ſpoke of under the name and notion of the ſun or ſtar that giveth light unto the world; "there ſhall come a ſtar out of Jacob, ſaid Balaam," Numb. xxiv. 17. "And he ſhall be as the light of the morning when the Sun riſeth, ſaith David," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. And the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaking of his coming ſaith, "The people that walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great light, and they that dwelt in the land of the ſhadow of death, upon them hath the light ſhined," Iſa. ix. 2. For that this was ſpoken of Chriſt to have the authority of the Evangeliſts, *Mat.* iv. 16. To the ſame purpoſe, is that of the ſame prophet, "Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people; but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee," Iſa. lx. 1, 2. "The Sun ſhall be no more the light by day, neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee: But the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and thy God thy glory." v. 19. To which we may add the many places where Chriſt is called NAZARETH, which we tranſlate the Branch, as, "I will bring forth my ſervant the Branch," Ezek. iii. 8. "Behold the man, whoſe

" name is the Branch," ch. vi. 12. " I will raiſe up to David a righteous Branch, Jer. xxiii. 5. " And a Branch of Righteouſneſs," xxiii. 25. In all which places the original word ſignifies alſo " the riſing of the Sun," and is accordingly rendered by the LXX. *Anatole Oriens*, not that part of heaven where the Sun riſeth, but the Sun itſelf as riſing there. And ſo it is tranſlated alſo both in the Syriac and Arabic verſions. And where it is ſaid, ' In that day ſhall the branch ' of the Lord be beautiful,' Iſa. iv. 2. In the LXX. it is *epilampſei ho Theos*, *God ſhall ſhine forth.* In the Syriac, ' The riſing of the Lord ſhall be for glory.' In Arabic, ' The Lord ſhall riſe as the Sun.' And that this is the true ſenſe of the word in all theſe places, appears from the propheſy of Zacharias the Father of John the Baptiſt; for ſpeaking of Chriſt's coming, he expreſſes it according to our tranſlation, by ſaying, ' The day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us,' Luke i. 78. But in the original it is the ſame word that the LXX. uſe in all the aforeſaid places. *Anatole*, *Oriens*, *the Riſing-Sun.* And it is much to be obſerved, that all the ſaid places of the prophets are interpreted of the Meſſiah or Chriſt, by the Targum or Chaldee paraphraſe made by the ancient Jews themſelves; for TASH, *the Riſing-Sun*, is there tranſlated MESSIAH, the Chriſt, as if it was only another name for the Meſſiah, the Saviour of the world. From all which it appears, that when the prophet here calls our Saviour Chriſt, the Son of righteouſneſs, he ſpeaks according to the common ſenſe and practice of the church.

And verily he may well be called the Sun, both in reſpect of what he is in himſelf, and in reſpect of what he is to us. As there is but one Sun in the firmament, it is the chief of all creatures, that we ſee in the world. There is nothing upon earth, but what is vaſtly inferior, the very ſtars of heaven ſeem no way comparable to it. It is the top, the head, the glory of all viſible objects: In like manner, there is but one Saviour in the world, he is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the Sun itſelf, but above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come. *All things are put under his feet, and he is given to be head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 21, 22. The very angels, authorities, and powers of heaven, *are all made ſubject to him*, 1 Pet. iii. 22. And that is the reaſon that he is ſaid to be at the right hand of God, becauſe he is preferred before, and ſet over the whole creation, next to the Al-

mighty Creator himſelf, where he now reigns, and doth whatſoever he pleaſeth in heaven and in earth.

And as the ſun is in itſelf alſo the moſt glorious, as well as the moſt excellent creature we ſee, of ſuch tranſcendent beauty, ſplendour and glory, that we cannot look ſtedfaſtly upon it, but our eyes are preſently dazzled; ſo is *Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs:* When he was transfigured, *his face did ſhine as the ſun*, Mat. xvii. 2. When St. John had a glimpſe of him, *he ſaw his countenance as the ſun that ſhineth in his ſtrength*, Rev. i. 16. When he appeared to St. Paul going to Damaſcus at mid-day, *there was a light above the brightneſs of the ſun ſhining round about him, and them that journeyed with him*, Acts xxvi. 13. And it is no wonder, *For he is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3. And therefore muſt needs ſhine more gloriouſly than it is poſſible for any meer creature to do; his very body, by reaſon of its union to the divine perſon, *is a glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21. The moſt glorious, doubtleſs, of all the bodies in the world, as far exceeding the ſun, as that doth a clod of earth; inſomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as he now ſhines forth in all his glory in the higheſt heavens, how would our eyes be dazzled? Our whole ſouls amazed and confounded at his excellent Glory? The ſun would appear to us no otherwiſe than as the moon and ſtars do, when the ſun is up. And he that ſo far excels the ſun in that very property, wherein the ſun excels all other things, may well be called the ſun: The Sun by way of pre eminence, the moſt glorious ſun in the world, in compariſon whereof nothing elſe deſerves to be called by that name. Neither may our bleſſed Saviour be juſtly called by this glorious name, only for what he is in himſelf, but likewiſe from what he doth for us; as may be eaſily demonſtrated from all the benefits that we receive from the ſun. I ſhall inſtance in ſome of the moſt plain and obvious.

Firſt, therefore, the ſun we know is the fountain of all the light that we have upon earth, without which we could ſee nothing, not ſo much as the way that is before us, but ſhould always be groping and ſtumbling in the dark; whereas by it we can diſcern every thing that is about us, or at any diſtance from us, as far as our ſight can reach. In which reſpect our bleſſed Lord is the Sun indeed; *The light of the world*, John viii. 12. "The true light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world," c. i. 9. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael," Luke i. 32.

" A marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. Whereby we can ſee things that are not viſible to the eye, as plainly as we do thoſe that are. For this " Day-ſpring from on high," this Sun of Righteouſneſs hath viſited us, " to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace," Luke i. 78, 79. To ſhew us the inviſible things of God, and direct us to all things belonging to our everlaſting peace and happineſs. He hath made them all clear and manifeſt to us in his goſpel. " But whatſoever maketh manifeſt is light," Eph. v. 13. Wherefore he is ſaid to have brought " life and immortality to light through the goſpel," 2 Tim. i. 10. Becauſe he hath there ſo clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of his holy goſpel we may ſee all things neceſſary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal life, as plainly as we can ſee the moſt viſible objects at noon-day.

By this light we can ſee as much of the glory of God himſelf, as our mortal nature can bear. For, " No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18. " Neither knoweth any man the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him," Mat. xi. 27. So that no man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by his Son our Saviour Chriſt. But by this means they that lived before might ſee him as by twilight; we who live after this Sun is riſen, may ſee him by the cleareſt light that can be given of him; for he hath fully revealed and declared himſelf to us in the goſpel.

By this glorious light, we can ſee into the myſtery of the eternal Trinity in Unity, ſo as to believe that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are one, one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at firſt by his word, and ſtill upholds and orders all things according to his will: That God the Son was made fleſh, became man, and as ſuch died upon the croſs, and ſo offered up himſelf as a Sacrifice for the ſins of the whole world; that he aroſe again, went up to heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God; that upon our repentance and faith in him our ſins are pardoned, and he that made us is reconciled to us by the merits of his ſaid death; that by the power of his interceſſion which he now makes in heaven for us, we are juſtified or accounted righteous in him, before him, and in him our Almighty Father; that God the Holy Ghoſt abides continually with his church, moving upon, actuating and influencing the means of

grace that are there adminiſtered; that he ſanctifies all that believe in Chriſt, leads them into all truth, comforts them in all their troubles, and aſſiſts them in doing whatſoever is required of them. Theſe and many ſuch great and neceſſary truths, as lay in a great meaſure hid before, are now, by the light of the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining in his goſpel, made ſo plain and evident, that all may ſee them, except they wilfully ſhut their eyes, or turn their backs upon them.

And though the Sun in the firmament enlightens only the air, to make it a fit medium through which to ſee; this glorious light that comes from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, enlightens men's minds to, and opens their eyes *to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the law of God*, Pſal. cxix. 18. And that too ſo effectually in ſome, that they likewiſe are able to enlighten others, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkneſs to light, *Acts* xxvi. 18. Inſomuch that they are alſo the light of the world, *Mat.* v. 14. Not originally in themſelves, but by communication from him, as the moon is firſt enlightened by the Sun, and then reflects its light to the earth.

Moreover, the ſun is the firſt cauſe under God, not only of light, but alſo of all the life, that is in any creature upon earth, without which nothing could live, no, not ſo much as a vegetable, much leſs an animal life; for that which we call life, wherewith ſuch creatures as have organs fitted for it, are actuated and quickened, ſo as to be ſaid properly to live, it all depends upon the heat and influence of the Sun. Should the ſun once ceaſe to be, or to influences the world, all living creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the fountain of all ſpiritual life. "In thee, ſaith David, is the fountain of life, in thy light ſhall we ſee light," Pſal. xxxvi. 9. where we ſee that light and life in this ſenſe alſo go together; they both proceed from the ſame fountain, "The Sun of Righteouſneſs;" who therefore ſaith "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life," John viii. 12. That light which hath life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; ſo that he is both life and light itſelf. "I am, ſaith he, the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And our life, as the apoſtle calls him, Col. iii. 4. "Even the life of all that believe in him. The life that I now live in the fleſh," ſaith the ſame apoſtle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. "And therefore he who believeth, and ſo hath the Son, he hath

life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life," John v. 12.

From all which it appears, that *all men by nature are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. ii. 1. *But when any ariſe from the dead by faith, it is Chriſt that gives them life*, c. v. 14. *Who came into the world on purpoſe that they might have life, and that they might have it the more abundantly*, John x. 10. More abundantly, that is, in the higheſt and moſt excellent manner that is poſſible for men to live; for this life which the Sun of righteouſneſs raiſes believers to, is the life of righteouſneſs, an holy, an heavenly, a ſpiritual, divine life; it is the life of faith, whereby they live to other purpoſes, and in a quite different manner from other men; they live to God, and not unto the world; they live in a conſtant dependance upon him, and ſubmiſſion to him; they live with a firm belief of his word, and ſincere obedience to his laws; they live altogether in his ſervice, ſo that *whether they eat or drink, or whatſoever they do, they ſtill do it to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. In ſhort, they ſtrive all they can to do the will of God upon earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven, and ſo have their converſation there, where their Saviour and their treaſure is.

But this life is infuſed in them, only by the rays of the Sun of righteouſneſs, by the holy ſpirit which proceedeth from Chriſt, whereby they being born again, and made the children of light, thus walk in newneſs of life; and ſo it is nouriſhed alſo, preſerved and ſtrengthened only by him, who therefore calls himſelf *the Bread of life*, John vi. 35, 48. And the Bread of God, *which cometh from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, v. 33. *the living Bread, of which if any man eateth, he ſhall live for ever*, v. 51. And this bread which he gives is his fleſh, *which he gave for the life of the world*, ibid. *For his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; ſo that whoſo eateth his fleſh, and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life, and he will raiſe him up at the* laſt day, *that he may live for ever*, v. 54, 55, 58. *For Chriſt is the reſurrection and the* life; *whoſoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet* ſhall *he live, and whoſoever liveth and believeth in him* ſhall *never die*, c. ix. 25, 26. Though his body may die, yet not his ſoul: and his body alſo at the laſt day ſhall be raiſed again to life, by the power of this glorious Sun: "For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made "alive," 1 *Cor.* xv. 22.

Seeing therefore that Jeſus Chriſt is the fountain of the life of righteouſneſs, the author of that ſpiritual and eternal life

which the righteous live, as the ſun is of our natural, he alſo may moſt properly be called the ſun of righteouſneſs, as he is in the words before us. And ſo he may be likewiſe from his chearing and refreſhing our ſpirits in the inward man as the ſun does in the outward. "The light of the eyes, ſaith "the wiſe man, rejoiceth the heart, *Prov.* xv. 30. And truly "the light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to "behold the ſun, *Eccleſ.* xi. 7." This we all find by daily experience, and ſo do we too, that the light and heat of the ſun agitate or move our animal ſpirits in ſo benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more chearful and pleaſant when the ſun ſhines clearly than we are in a dark night or a cloudy day. But in this the ſun of righteouſneſs infinitely exceeds the other, for he is the fountain not only of ſome, but of all the true joy and comfort that his faithful people have, or ever can have in the world. It all proceeds from him, whom having not ſeen they love, in whom, though now they ſee him not, *yet believing, they rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raiſed again for their juſtification, he manifeſteth himſelf and his ſpecial love and favour to them, in the pardon of their ſins, and their reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their ſouls are filled, not only with unſpeakable, but glorious joy, of the ſame nature of that which the ſaints in heaven are continually tranſported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance, and his cauſing his face to ſhine upon them, *Pſal.* iv. 6. lxvii. 1. and lxxx. 3. *Numb.* vi. 25. When the ſun of righteouſneſs thus ſhineth upon them, refreſhing and comforting their hearts, by the ſweet influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.

But the ſun doth not only refreſh the earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by this means, under God, that plants grow and bring forth fruit, and that animals do the reſpective works which God hath ſet them. So is Chriſt the cauſe or author of all the good and righteous works that are done in the world; he himſelf ſaith, *without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. And his apoſtle could ſay upon his own experience, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. And that the fruits, all the fruits of righteouſneſs, are by Jeſus Chriſt, or come from him, *chap.* i. 11. Who therefore in this reſpect alſo may well be termed *the Sun of Righteouſneſs.*

To which we may likewiſe add, that as the works which God hath made upon earth by his power, although they have no light in themſelves whereby they can be ſeen, yet they appear in all their beauty and colours by the Sun reflecting his light upon them; ſo the works which his ſervants do by his aſſiſtance and grace, although they have no real worth, nor are exactly righteous in themſelves, yet by the Sun of righteouſneſs reflecting his righteouſneſs upon them, they ſeem or are accounted righteous in the ſight of God; or, as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, *they are acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Without whom therefore there could be no ſuch thing as righteouſneſs ſeen upon earth, no more than there could be colours without light. But, "as by one man's "diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience "of one ſhall many be made righteous," *Rom.* v. 19. both ſincerely righteous in themſelves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by his righteouſneſs imputed to them. So that all righteouſneſs, both as it is performed by men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jeſus Chriſt. And this ſeems to be the great reaſon, wherefore he is here called in a peculiar manner the Sun of righteouſneſs, and promiſed to ariſe to his people *with healing in his wings*, that they may grow up as calves in the ſtalls; to ſhew that it is by him only that they are healed of their infirmities, and reſtored to a ſound mind, ſo as to grow in grace and bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, ſuch righteouſneſs as by him is acceptable to God, from whom they ſhall therefore at the laſt day receive the crown of righteouſneſs, that crown which this Sun of righteouſneſs hath procured for them.

Upon theſe, among many other accounts, Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour of mankind may be truly called the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as he is here by the ſpirit of truth itſelf, for our admonition and comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our bleſſed Saviour, and to exerciſe our faith in him, ſo as to love and honour him with all our hearts, and to put our whole truſt and confidence in him for all things neceſſary to our eternal ſalvation. Foraſmuch as we are by this means given to underſtand, that what the ſun is to this lower world, the ſame is Chriſt to his church. But the ſun, as we have heard, is the moſt excellent, and moſt glorious that we ſee in the world. It is the next cauſe, under God, of all the light that is in the air, and of all the life that any creatures live upon the earth. It is that which refreſheth the earth, and makes it fruitful. It is that alſo which gives a

luſtre to all things that are about us, ſo as to make them pleaſing and delightful to the eye.

And accordingly, whenſoever I think of my bleſſed Saviour, the Sun of righteouſneſs, I apprehend, or rather by the eye of faith I behold him in the higheſt heavens, there ſhining in glory and ſplendor infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear, inveſted with ſupreme majeſty, honour, and authority over the whole creation. I behold him there ſurrounded with an innumerable company of holy angels, as ſo many fixed ſtars, and of glorified ſaints as planets enlightened by him; all his ſatellites or ſervants waiting upon him, ready upon all occaſions to reflect and convey his benign influences or favour to his people upon earth. I ſee him yonder, by his own light, I behold him diſplaying his bright beams, and diffuſing his light round about, over his whole church, both that which is triumphant in heaven, and that which is militant here on earth; that all the members of it may ſee all things belonging to their peace. I behold him continually ſending down his quickening ſpirit upon thoſe who are baptized into, and believe in his holy name, to regenerate them, to be a ſtanding principle of a new and divine life in them. I behold him there manifeſting himſelf, and cauſing his face to ſhine upon thoſe who look up to him, ſo as to refreſh and chear their ſpirits, to make them briſk and lively, and able to run *with patience the race that is ſet before them.* I behold him there continually iſſuing forth his holy ſpirit, to actuate and influence the adminiſtration of his word and ſacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in grace, and be fruitful in every good word and work. I behold the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhining with ſo much power and efficacy upon his church, that all the good works which are done in it, though imperfect in themſelves, do notwithſtanding appear through him as good and righteous in the ſight of God himſelf, and are accordingly rewarded by him. In ſhort, as the Sun was made to govern the day, ſo I behold the Sun of righteouſneſs as governing his church, and ordering all things both within and without it, ſo as to make them work together for the good of thoſe who love God, till he hath brought them all to himſelf, to live with them in the higheſt heavens, where they alſo ſhall by his means *ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father for ever,* Mat. xiii. 43.

Could we keep theſe and ſuch-like thoughts of our bleſſed Saviour always freſh in our minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhining conti-

nually upon us and his whole church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable lives ſhould we then lead? We ſhould then deſpiſe the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, as nothing, as leſs than nothing, in compariſon of this moſt glorious Sun and his righteouſneſs. We ſhould then, with St. *Paul*, *count all things but loſs in compariſon of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, and ſhould *count them but dung, that we may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having our own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 8, 9. We ſhould then leave gazing upon the trifles of the lower world, and ſhould be always looking up to the Sun of righteouſneſs, ſo as to be enlightened by him, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 5. With ſuch a light as will diſcover to us the glories of the other world, together with the way that leads to it.

We ſhould then abhor and deteſt the works of darkneſs, and walk as the children of light, and accordingly ſhine as lights in the world. And then we ſhould have the light of God's countenance ſhining continually upon us, enlightening, enlivening, and refreſhing our whole ſouls, and purifying both our hearts and lives ſo, as to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; in that everlaſting light which comes from the Sun of righteouſneſs, who liveth and reigneth, and ſhineth with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, one God bleſſed for ever.

*FINIS.*